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THE MYSTERY OF KILLARD.

THE MYSTERY OF KILLARD.

A Novel.

By RICHARD DOWLING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE ST., STRAND
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TO

My Mother.

CONTENTS.

Part I.—The Race of Lane.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	An Arrival at Killard	1
II.	Tom the Fool's News	11
III.	A Title Deed	20
IV.	A Last Appeal	38
V.	A Christian Heir	50
VI.	The Two Gentlemen of Clonmore	77
VII.	"Ten Guineas!"	97
VIII.	A Sound From the Island	109
IX.	From Killard to the Bishop's	140
X.	A Traitor Discovered	151
XI.	A New Father	170

CHAP PAGE
XII. HIEROGLYPHICS 186
XIII. CAHILL FINDS AN EMISSARY TO THE ISLAND 200
XIV. AFTER THE EXPULSION 218
XV. RESTITUTION 231
XVI. JOHN LANE LEARNS TO SPEAK . . . 244

THE MYSTERY OF KILLARD.

Part I.—The Race of Lane.

CHAPTER I.

AN ARRIVAL AT KILLARD.

"WHAT a gale!" cried the man of the house, rising from the fire and placing a rush mat against the slit under the door. "There hasn't been a worse gale this year. November is always bad, always bad. It's well they took my advice and didn't put out this morning. When I got up I noticed the fire-balls, and the streaks across the sun. Not a boat of them would see land again if

they had gone. It's getting worse. God help all poor souls at sea this night."

"Amen," responded his wife with a shudder.

The man of the house came back to the fire, sat down, and all was silent save the howling of the wind, and the thunderous tumult of the billows pierced shrilly now and then by the shrieks of waves shattered into spray against the ramparts of the land.

The man of the house was low-sized, thick-set, grizzled, and of about five-and-forty years of age. He had dark-grey blue eyes; his hair had been dark once; his body bent slightly towards the left side, and his face was dull in colour and blotched from fronting the rough airs and meeting the rains of heaven and the salt waifs of the winds. Beside him sat his only child, a daughter of fifteen, with pale, quiet face,

light-blue eyes and flaxen hair. Opposite him sat his wife, large and broad, full-fronted, light-eyed, fair, with hair like her daughter's. The woman was knitting, the daughter's hands hung in her own lap, she leaned her head against the wall behind her and kept her eyes fixed on the fire.

John Cantillon, the man of the house, bent over the fire smoking a short pipe. The words spoken by him had been uttered in Irish. He had referred to the boats of Killard, a small fishing village on the coast of the county Clare. He himself was a fisherman sailing out of the village on the skirt of which his house stood. He possessed a boat of his own, employed men to assist him, and was proprietor of the nets and tackle; had purchased them with his savings, and not with money borrowed at interest, as in the case of many of the fishermen of Killard.

The chamber in which the family sat discharged the joint duties of kitchen and dining-room. A door opened from it to the air. The floor was earthen, a large plate-rack, the top of which was covered with the cooking utensils, stood in a line with the door, two sea-chests covered with rush mats made seats for the huge open chimney down which the wind bellowed, scattering now and then the glitting hail of golden sparks. From a hook, suspended by an iron rod to a cross-beam half way up the chimney, hung a large pot of potatoes over the fire. Dried fish depended from the rafters; there were four deal chairs and a few three-legged stools. In the centre of the earthen floor stood a square deal table with stout legs. On a rack facing the door hung some broken fishing-nets and tackle. In the corner lay a pile of cordage and sails,

and standing up against the chimney-place were two long slender oars with narrow blades. The table was spread with jugs of milk, knives, mugs, and common blue Delft plates. Opposite the fireplace, and on each side of the plate-rack, was a door, each leading into a small sleeping-chamber. These doors were in a low partition-wall which did not reach to the rafters. Above this wall, and over the sleeping-rooms, yawned a large open space from which projected boat-gear; among this gear the dull glare of the peat-fire formed fantastic shapes and made mysterious shadows.

"I think they're done," said the man, pointing to the pot of potatoes. "Let us have supper."

The woman rose, lifted the pot off the hook, placed it on the ground, and having thrown a coarse canvas cloth over the steam-

ing water, raised her head awhile listening to the wind, then looked around, listened again, and shuddered.

Observing her motions the man of the house stood up, and seizing the pothooks, said:—

"It's too wild for you to face the wind, Bridget. I'll take them out and strain them."

Meanwhile the girl had left her place, and was busy arranging the things on the table. Just as the man turned with the pot held in the pothooks at arm's length before him, a loud knocking sounded at the door. The women uttered exclamations. Cantillon placed the pot on the floor and opened the door.

For an instant the rush of wind deafened all, but it caused the fire to flare up, and showed a tall, broad, lank, young man stand-

ing hatless against the dark background of the night. He bowed, and made a gesture requesting leave to enter. The master of the house bowed too, and motioned him to come in. He crossed the threshold; in an instant the door once more closed, and it became possible to hear.

"God save all here," saluted the stranger.

"God save you kindly, man," returned Cantillon, looking suspiciously at the unknown face and the powerful frame. There was a wild expression on the countenance, and the breath of the intruder came short.

"God keep the house, and all that's in it, from hurt or harm," he continued, gazing around with relief. Now that the wild look yielded a little, Cantillon felt less suspicious.

"Thank you kindly. You're welcome to the house. Take a seat by the fire. You have come a long journey?"

With a heavy sigh the traveller threw himself on one of the chests in the chimney-corner, and wiped his forehead with a large blue pocket-handkerchief spotted with circles of white.

"Ay," he answered, "I have come a long way to-day; forty miles on foot, with little to eat, and I've run the last two miles along the cliffs. It's a mercy I din't go over. They are awful cliffs, full of sudden danger. I steered by the spray. If there had been no spray I should have been gulls' meat by this, for I could not but run." He wiped his forehead once more and shuddered.

"But, good man," demanded Cantillon, from whom all uneasiness had departed by this time, "what drove you to run two miles in the heel of your heavy day?"

"Something I saw," half whispered the other.

"Something you saw! What was it?"

"They told me of *it* at Cunnager, eight miles south, and that the cliffs were the shortest way, and by them I travelled. It was a bad evening, and when night fell mercy left the elements. The sea was cloud and the clouds were sea, and the land a mist; and as I came I saw by an island—for there was a young moon struggling for man in the heavens—I saw in the spray and mist over the waters, by that island, something that stopped my heart and made me wonder if the coast was real or beyond the world. I saw—"

"We know," murmured the fisherman, laying his hand kindly on the other's. "You saw the Spirit of Tears; she is often seen hereabouts. But she is a good spirit, this Spirit of Tears."

"The Spirit of Tears," whispered the two

women, drawing closer together. "There must have been a wreck near the Bishop's Island in this storm. Heaven between us all and harm!"

"Amen," responded the man devoutly.

"Amen," whispered the others. Then Cantillon, turning to the stranger, "You must be fainting for something to eat. Wife, give him milk and bread while I strain the potatoes. When he gets some supper, he'll be for a dance, I warrant."

It was towards the close of November in the year 1843, that the stranger arrived at the house of John Cantillon, in the village of Killard, county Clare.

CHAPTER II.

TOM THE FOOL'S NEWS.

WHEN supper was over and the table cleared, the four retired to the large chimney-place. This was a kind of interior chamber, open on one side, closed in by the gable of the house at the back, and by two thin walls forming the lower portion of the vast flue. At a height of about five feet from the floor a cross-beam connected the two sides of the flue, and on this beam rested a brick partition, reaching to the roof; this made the fourth side of the chimney.

More turf having been heaped on the hearth and the ashes drawn away, the four people assumed easy attitudes. Cantillon sat outside on the same chest as the stranger. Mrs. Cantillon opposite to him, and opposite the young man was Mary, the daughter.

The food and rest and warmth had considerably restored the stranger.

In the dull light his countenance looked thoughtful, almost sad. He was over six feet in height, and had the appearance of great strength notwithstanding his want of bulk. The two men smoked their pipes.

Mrs. Cantillon knitted; Mary sat leaning her head against the corner, with her hands clasped in her lap.

"No doubt you're wondering what drove me here?"

"It isn't for us to ask questions. We have bit and sup for those who come, and

good welcome, and no questions," answered Cantillon, with hospitable warmth and still more hospitable humility.

"Well, I'll tell you, anyway. I had a brother named Bill—Bill Martin——"

"Bill Martin!" cried the three, rousing up and looking at the speaker with much interest.

"Yes, Bill Martin. He came to these parts four years ago, and was drowned in the spring of this year, he and three others. As he did well here, and the fishing on the east-coast is bad, I started for Killard across the country, and when I saw the village I rapped at the first house there was a light in; for I knew that although I was a stranger, and far away from home, the door would be opened, the fire brightened, with a hundred thousand welcomes; for if I've travelled miles, they were all Irish

ones, and, though they tell me the Irish ones are longer than the English, there's always a warm welcome for the stranger at the end of Irish miles, and that shortens the road."

Cantillon had risen; and when the young man ceased to speak, caught him by the hand and shook him heartily.

"I'm proud to see you. Poor Bill fished in one of my boats, and a carefuller or better hand I never had. But that March gale; none of us knew 'twas coming. Poor souls! —poor souls! Poor Bill! Sit down, young man, sit down; although times aren't here now what they once were, we'll find an oar for you in one of my boats, never fear. Why, I loved poor Bill as if he was my son!"

The women had drawn near Martin; the

arm of the man of the house rested on the stranger's shoulder.

Suddenly the door flew open, a wild gust of wind dashed through the room, the women shrieked, the elder dropped on her knees; she thought the spirit of the living man's brother had come to greet him. In an instant the door was closed and bolted by a man who had entered, at the same time his voice was heard crying huskily:—

"There, that will keep you out, you bullying vixen! You won't get at me through that, you cowardly beast! you she-imp of that black witch!"

His tones were fierce and frantic. Turning and seeing the woman on her knees, he moderated his manner.

"Get up! Get up, and don't be a fool. Can't you see it's only me; Tom the Fool, and not my she-wolf of a grandmother?

Why is my own flesh and blood always showing the whipcord of the hail where to bite? Why is that she-wolf of a grandmother always letting the fires of the wind at my ears and neck? Why is that villainous hag always spitting in my face? Don't be a fool; it's only Tom the Fool. But I'll be even with my traitor of a grandmother. I'll do what I used to do when she was here; I'll put snuff in her tea. I'll put snuff in her tea, I will, Mrs. Cantillon, as sure as my name is Tom the Fool!"

He uttered this speech in a thick guttural tone, rising to a scream when his vindictiveness predominated, sinking to almost an inarticulate gabble when he spoke to the woman. In the meantime the latter had risen.

"I come with the tobacco for the man of the house; real Limerick twist, full of juice,

and as lasting as Carrigeen moss, only greasier. Smell it. A smell of it would wake a corpse, if he could only be persuaded to draw one breath through his nose. Here's the stockings and stay-laces for the woman of the house, and the shawl for the white girl, and here's— Stop! here's the cure for the soldier, but that's not for this house, but for the widow O'Brien — I mean her pigs—between them and all harm."

From the folds of an ill-fitting oil-coat he produced the articles as he spoke, and handed each to the person for whom it was intended. Tom was the light messenger of the little colony by the sea, and made frequent visits to the small town of Clonmore to purchase articles which the one shop of Killard could not supply. In winter, when the carts went seldom inland with fish, Tom

remained almost the only link connecting Killard with the larger world.

As soon as he had delivered all he sat down on a stool in front of the fire and remained mute. His hands were, however, busy; for drawing one sod of turf out of the fire, he isolated it from the rest, and with the bellows commenced blowing violently at it.

"Any news from Clonmore, Tom?" demanded Cantillon.

Tom took no heed, but went on more vigorously at his blowing.

The fisherman repeated his question.

Tom's whole faculties were directed to the hissing turf. At length he spoke, in a tone of soliloquy:—

"That's the way the she-wolf blew on the Bishop's. That's the way the she-wolf blew on the Bishop's. That way! that way!

that way! until she blew him away—blew him away! Blew him into Killard—blew him into Killard! Blew the dummy into Killard; and he's there now, like his father before him, looking for a wife."

Here he flung down the bellows with a loud bang that made all start.

"The dummy looking for a wife in Killard?" cried Mrs. Cantillon and her husband in a breath.

"Yes; and it must be a dummy wife, too—like his father's; and, faith, the women of Killard aren't much good for dummies, as the men know. So they haven't one that is dumb, or that would act dumbness for half-an-hour, if you gave her all the red gurnet in the sea; so he's going inland in the morning to seek farther and fare worse."

CHAPTER III.

A TITLE DEED.

WHEN Tom the Fool had gone, the four people in the fisherman's cottage sat in the same order as before. There was much to talk over—the man's dead brother, the fishing on both the eastern and western coasts, the tackle employed, the kinds, qualities, and value of the fish caught, the winds and currents, and the different sorts of boats used. On the east coast they fished in wooden boats and yawls; on the west they had currachs of wicker, or slight lath frames,

covered with tarred canvas. All this conversation passed between the two men. In a while the subject could yield no more matter for conversation, the traveller was worn out, and volunteered nothing. After a long silence the woman looked at her husband, and said,

"'Twasn't for nothing the Spirit of Tears was at the Bishop's to-night. It must have been because that heathen, David Lane, has left it to find a wife like his mother, instead of staying where he is by himself, and letting his bad name and race die out."

"Hush!" returned the fisherman; "it isn't for us to judge. He may be better in the sight of Heaven than any one in Killard parish, big as it is. He doesn't do harm to anyone on that lonely island, and who'd grudge him his few hand-lines from the

rocks? Not I! If I get my bread out of the sea, it isn't I fill the sea with fish, and everyone is free to come and take."

This impartial speech of the man was uttered in a low voice, between whiffs of his pipe; but towards the end of it there was a twinkle in his blue-grey eye, as though he were talking for a purpose. His object appeared in the tone and purport of his wife's retort.

"As good as any of us! Well, I like that! It's yourself all out to say so. My idea is that anyone who could say such a thing is no better than David Lane himself—not, young man, that the heathen has any right to a Christian name, for he never put his feet inside the chapel in all his days, and the blessed water never touched his head, and it's a wonder his head doesn't take fire, the black-hearted unbeliever."

"That's it," said the husband, in slow approval; "that's it. You see, Bridget, you yourself don't think me more than a bad likeness of him in the way of my talk (though for the matter of that he can't be half so bad, for he doesn't speak an ill word of anyone, and never did), and unless you think there's no one worse than I in the parish, I am, according to your own account, so very near him in badness that you ought to keep your tongue off him out of respect to his cousin-german in wickedness, that's your husband."

He concealed a smile with his horny hand, and winked solemnly through the firelight at his daughter, who smiled back to him, and clapped her hands softly as they lay in her lap. Edward Martin saw the wink and the smile. She had not smiled before. He was very tired, but he shook

himself up a little, and paid more attention to what was going on.

"Don't mind a word he says, young man," cried the woman excitedly; "he's just as hard on him as anyone else; he's only joking. It's no joking matter, though."

The husband cleared his throat humbly.

"I know," he replied, keeping his eye fixed on his daughter, "I know I'm not soft on him, *like some of us*, because he's a landed gentleman, and owns the Bishop's Island. There's many a girl in the parish would be glad to leave her own people and go there to be lord and master of a whole island, and it isn't clear to me if *some of us* were widows to-morrow, that we wouldn't jump at David Lane, dumb as he is."

He winked again in the same slow, solemn fashion at his daughter, and she smiled appreciation of his humour.

"There's for you! there's for you!" cried the wife in exasperation, letting her knitting fall into her lap, and folding her arms. "I don't mind his making little of me and my taste; but it ill becomes him to say to my face that I think so meanly of my husband as to put the thought of him and that Lane into one day, let alone anything like a regard for David Lane. It's too bad, after my years of love and anxiety, and my nights of prayers and dread while he was out in the gales. It's too bad!"

Her tone had fallen to one of tearful reproach. The slow, grey eyes of her husband came back to her face, and rested on it tenderly and somewhat proudly. He removed the pipe from his lips, and coughed slightly. "Whist!" said he; "whist, Biddy!"

She withdrew her glance from the face of Edward Martin, and for a little while the husband and wife gazed into one another's eyes. His look was a disclaimer of what he had uttered, and an acknowledgment for all her love. Gradually her face lost its look of reproach, and instead showed penitence for not having seen his joke, and behind the penitence confidence and love.

When the eyes had done their work, as if by instinct each looked down. Then the man said, in his ordinary way,

"Bridget, tell the traveller about this David Lane, and I won't put it in my last will and testament that you're to marry him, if so be he is a widower. Tell the traveller; 'twill pass away the time."

The master of the house drew the turf together on the hearth, and refilled his pipe; the girl unclasped her hands, and placing

one against the wall, rested her head on it. The young man leaned forward, with one hand on his knee.

Outside, the gale still raged and the waters bellowed. Now and then drops of rain hissed in the fire; but notwithstanding exterior tumult, the listening attitudes of all and the expression of mysterious interest on the countenance of the young man made the place seem hushed. The fisherman's wife began her tale:—

"The Bishop's Island is little more than an acre of land. There's nothing on it but a low stone hut. It is only two boats' length from the shore, and there is no way of getting to it from a boat. Well, long before I was born this Lane's father used to live in this hut, without paying any rent to the old Lord Clonmore, who owns all hereabouts. The father often came down

to the village, and only that he never darkened the door of the chapel, there was nothing against him. You may think that was as bad as it could be, but wait until you hear about what he did later on.

"One winter's day old Lane—he was rising sixty then—gave out that he wanted a wife. Considering the place he lived in, and the smallness of his means (for he made only little by the hand-lines, and plaiting rush-mats wouldn't keep a curlew), everyone in the village was astonished at his boldness; and, take my word, there was fun to find out who old Lane would get his first refusal from; all said it would be Ellen Keogh, as she was old and bedridden, and they said if he married her he needn't take her to the Bishop's, as she'd never run away from him—anyone else, after one month,

would be very likely to give him the chance of injuring his health by eating all his earnings. But he turned the laugh against the village by saying there was nothing in it that would suit him. So he put a stick over his shoulder, and went inland.

"In a month he was back again with his wife. As you may think, all the village went into old Pat Casey's (his son Pat now has the place) on one excuse or another, when they heard of the bride being there. I myself went and saw her. She was a tall, thin, pale-faced, sickly-looking poor creature, who seemed as though she never knew a wholesome day, and had got the Call, and was making ready to go on her long Journey. She had very bright, quick eyes. I noticed them most of all.

"My poor mother spoke to her; the bride smiled, made signs, and shook her

head. 'He may have got a wife to suit him,' thought I; 'but she is as ill-mannered in company as a sow at meals.' Just then in came her husband, and he said, 'Don't take offence, neighbours, at her not speaking to you; she can't; she's a dummy.'

"With those words he made signs to her, and she got up, and the bride and bridegroom went out in the wind and rain and walked across the downs to the Bishop's, he keeping in front to shelter her from the weather. Where he got her no one knew, and why he married a dumb wife no living man or woman ever since found out; but after this people shunned him, and there were queer stories told about the Island, and fires were seen on it, and voices were heard, and the Spirit of Tears often came there, as you saw her to-night; and the neighbours said that he sold himself into

Darkness, and had dealings with the Evil One.

"In course of time, he brought his wife back to the village, hired old Pat Casey's back room, and there a son was born to him, and there the young mother, after kissing her baby, put her hand on her poor deaf ears as though she heard at last, though no one had spoken in the room. It was the Call, and she smiled, and then she died.

"I remember the day well. It was a Monday. I take my token of it by the coming back on the Sunday before of Andy Blake from the wars in Spain, where he lost his right arm. He said he put his sword and his arm into one of the enemy, and broke off the arm in the wound to poison the foeman, but he was always talking queerly.

"No one in the village cared to have the

child (though it was well grown and hearty) because of the noises and the sights about the Bishop's; so, after a little time, the man Lane carried the child inland and left it, he said, with his wife's people.

"For four years nothing particular happened. Then one day, while my mother was buying candles at old Pat Casey's, a man in a shawl came in and asked where Lane lived. The man carried a rosy-cheeked boy, gathered in under the shawl on his back. The stranger was footsore and tired, so old Pat Casey sent some one to call Lane. My mother waited with an excuse of expecting my father to come there for her on his way to the boats.

"When Lane arrived and saw the boy, he took him in his arms and kissed him. Then setting him on the floor, he lifted the tin scoop out of the scales and threw it with

all his might on the ground behind where the child stood. The men jumped and my mother screamed. Lane had his eyes fixed on the boy, who never moved nor even winked his lids, but stared around. As soon as the father saw this, he fell on his knees in the middle of the shop and cried out—

'*Thank God he cannot hear!*'

"It was a mercy the father wasn't struck dead who thanked Heaven for a blight he himself had helped to bring into the world by marrying that dumb creature. It is one thing to submit to the will of Heaven and another thing to be glad because Heaven afflicts others.

"Well, the father took his son with him to the Bishop's, and there the two lived until the child was grown up into a young man, then when old Lane was over eighty he

died. All the time there was no love lost between the people on the Island and the people of the village. All the neighbours, except Tom the Fool, who has no sense, turned their faces against old Lane, and they thought little better of the son, for they looked on him as a guilty monster, the offspring of a heathen and the property of Darkness, owing to his having been born to a prayer that was a curse.

"When the old man was gone, the neighbours got together and planned how they should get the son David Lane, out of the parish, so they sent for Billy Cahill, a bailiff of Lord Clonmore's, and put the case, and told how the people of the Bishop's paid no rent, and were under the protection of Darkness. They brought the bailiff with them, and he went to the Island and made signs to young Lane, and young Lane

crossed by a rope, and Tom the Fool put into signs (he was often with the dumb man and knew his ways) that Lane should go. Lane went back to his cabin. When he returned from it he had a paper in his breast, and what do you think it was? A deed under Lord Clonmore's own hand telling how his lordship has sold to old Lane the Bishop's Island for thirty pounds, and how it was his and his heirs' for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. Though the Island is little more than an acre, the bailiff told us, with a laugh, how old Lane had taken care to have put down in black and white that all the hawking, hunting, fishing, mines, wood, water, and foreshore rights were to be his and his heirs' for ever.

"You may take my word there was talk about this in Killard. Old Lane must have been scraping and pinching all his life to

get the thirty pounds together, unless he got it all in one sum when he was making the bargain with Darkness.

"The young Lane, who is now over thirty, continued on the Island as his father before him, and now, as you heard Tom the Fool say, he has come down to the village to find a wife, but is going inland because we have no one afflicted like himself. It's enough to bring the Anger down on the whole parish, and I only hope he'll never come back to these parts."

Here the woman ended. For a long time the traveller had been able to keep awake with the greatest difficulty. The moment her voice ceased, his head drooped heavily forward, and, worn out by fatigue and overcome by the heat of the fire, he fell asleep.

He roused up in a little while, and asked

where he could rest for the night. Cantillon had no room for him, unless he would sleep in the chimney corner. The young man rose and said good-night, having previously been told to go to Casey's, where he could be housed more comfortably, "and where," added Mrs. Cantillon, "you will see David Lane, of the Bishop's Island, who is on his travels for a wife."

CHAPTER IV.

A LAST APPEAL.

FOLLOWING instructions he had received from Cantillon, Martin found Pat Casey's house. Indeed, if he had been told no more than that such a place existed, he could not well miss it; for not only was it the solitary shop in the village of Killard, but, although nine o'clock had not yet arrived, there was light in no other house of the village, all the inhabitants, with the exception of those at Casey's, had gone to bed. The house itself was open

unusually late, partly because it harboured a guest, and principally because Father Murtagh, the parish priest of Killard, had sent word that he should call to see the guest.

Martin explained to the owner of the place, a plump, red-faced man, what he wanted, and added, that he had sought his house on the advice and with the recommendation of Cantillon.

"I don't know that I can treat you as well as I'd like to treat any friend of John Cantillon's; for, you see, we have only one room and David Lane has taken it, and there's only one truckle bed in it," returned the owner of the house.

"But," struck in a tall woman, his wife, "the traveller has nowhere else to go to, and we must only try to do our best for him. We can give him a few bundles of

straw and a couple of rush mats and a pair of blankets, and make a shake-down for him in the shop, if Lane objects to sharing the back room with him."

"I am much beholden to you," said Martin; "anywhere will do, so long as there is shelter; often I slept on the cliffs, but this is no night for that."

"Go into the back room," said Casey, "you'll find a fire there. We'll do our best for you, and welcome. Go in and sit down and rest yourself until we make up something for you to sleep on. You'll find Tom the Fool and Lane of the Island there."

"It's the room Lane was born in," added the woman, as she snuffed a large tallow dip candle that flared and flickered on the counter.

When Edward Martin entered the back

room he found Tom crouched on the floor, his face to the fire. In front of the fire, with his hands behind his back, stood the man of whom he had heard so much that evening.

The draught admitted through the open door caused the deaf mute to look round. His eyes ran quickly over the traveller, and, failing to recognise him, he placed his hand on Tom's shoulder and interrogated with a sign. While doing so he did not remove his glance from the stranger, and Tom had to stand up and step into the line of Lane's eyes before he could reply. His answer was that Martin had come a long way and was a friend. To the latter part, expressed by Tom taking one of his own hands in the other and shaking it, the mute dissented emphatically.

With the usual salutations, which were

answered by Tom, Martin drew a chair towards the fire and sat down. The Fool subsided into his old attitude; Lane retired a step from where he had stood, and kept his eyes still fixed on the new arrival. The expression of his face was one of almost hatred. Dislike and distrust were fully unmasked, and behind them lurked something like dread mingled with rage. But those who knew the man would not have been surprised at this, for he treated every stranger as an enemy. This peculiarity of his tended in no little way to increase his unpopularity, for the people of Killard were of a friendly, sociable nature, and, as far as their means went, loved to exercise the virtue of hospitality.

Martin was too tired to take an interest in the undisguised ill-will of the mute. He rested his arm on the back of his chair,

and having leant his head on it, was almost asleep when the door opened again, and Father Murtagh, the parish priest of Killard, stepped quietly into the room.

Father Murtagh stood a moment facing the light of the candle and fire. His face was a dull brownish-yellow, his cheeks sunken and furrowed, his figure emaciated almost to a skeleton, and in his eyes an expression not easy to analyse. In those dark eyes shrank weary trouble, anxious awe, tremulous self-distrust, profound self-questioning. He looked like a man who had undertaken some tremendous task, and, after entering upon it, found himself either unequal to it or fearful of his fitness for it. Taking the fact that he was a minister, and connecting this with the question of his own worthiness written upon his face, it seemed as though he stood in the presence

of the great Sacrifice, terrified rather than consoled by the reflection that he was heir to overwhelming responsibilities imposed by it on man.

For a while he surveyed in silence the group before him. Then he addressed the Fool,—"Tom, is what I hear about this unhappy man true? Is it a fact that he is going to take a wife, afflicted like himself, and that he intends doing so without making his submission to Heaven and repenting his past heathen life; without even receiving baptism?" The voice was low and quavering from sheer want of physical strength.

The Fool rose and bowed respectfully as he answered, "I'm not to blame, your Reverence, I did my best."

Accepting the implication as an answer, the priest clasped his hands and raised his

eyes in unquiet awe towards Heaven, as though he prayed for the other's acquittal, and pleaded in fierce grief his own utter impotence.

David Lane drew away from the priest as far as the room would allow, and stood scowling dangerously at him.

"I cannot speak to him," thought the priest in anguish, "and signs cannot now be made to answer. If I could only gain some time!"

The mute stood still, glaring resentfully at the priest. The latter looked again to Tom for help. "Can nothing be done?" he cried aloud. "Can nothing be done? Can we not, Tom, by any means make this wretched man pause. Tom, ask him, in Heaven's name, to wait; to wait, if it were only one month."

Tom took a long time to convey the idea

to Lane. At length a half-angry, half-suspicious light shone in the mute's eyes, and folding his arms tightly across his chest he shook his head with fierce resolution, and looked an exasperated negative at the clergyman.

"What is to be done? What is to be done?" cried Father Murtagh, glancing in unspeakable anguish from Martin to the Fool. "I have left no stone unturned to draw this man into the holy fold. I have importuned daily and nightly that the ice around his heart might be thawed and grace prevail. I have implored and entreated him. I have lost no opportunity, consistent with my other duties, to try to win him from his outrageous indifference. This responsibility is almost too great for my strength; not that I murmur, because it is placed upon me, but I feel a dead weight upon my soul. I

feel the full responsibility of his salvation resting as it were on my own, and I can do nothing! nothing! I am manacled and powerless. Oh! if he were only included under any banner of the Great Church I should be at rest. But to think that this man is as though the waters of the Jordan had never flowed, as though Calvary had never been! "

His head dropped on his chest, and for a while he stood in a reverie of despair. After a little time he raised his face suddenly towards heaven, his lips moved rapidly, his countenance was illumined with passionate earnestness, and from his eyes there came the light of complete faith. He looked as though he were within the visible eye of God, and were clamouring for a miracle. For a minute he remained thus, then lowering his head suddenly, he crossed the room

with a firm confident step to where the mute was standing, and falling before him on his knees held aloft in one hand a crucifix, and with the other pointed to Heaven. As he knelt there was a tyranny of entreaty in his face, as if denial were not to be possible.

Lane started at his approach, threw his body into a half-defensive attitude, with his right hand hanging clenched by his side, and his left clenched upon his breast. When the priest fell on his knees and held the crucifix aloft, Lane hissed and muttered through his white set teeth, and with a growl placed his back against the wall and flung up both his hands, holding them behind as far as they could go, against the wall.

Martin looked on in surprise and fear. But Tom took little interest in the scene. "I did my best," he muttered to himself, as

the priest and the mute held their arms aloft. "I did my best, you Reverence."

The deaf mute glanced hastily towards the door, slid quickly from the space between the priest and the wall, snatched up his hat off the table, and dashed out of the room, out through the shop, and out into the night, gibbering and shaking his arms to warn off all who would stay him.

Father Murtagh remained motionless for a moment, then his arms faltered and fell, his head drooped forward on his chest, and with a groan he sank to the ground, his strength exhausted by the wrestle between his duty and fate.

CHAPTER V.

A CHRISTIAN HEIR.

At a time when the popular faith of Ireland was under severe ban, and suffered persecution, a bishop of the Roman Church, driven from his diocese in the midland, sought security in Clare, and subsequently was obliged to retire to a place of utter obscurity; thus he came to a small island, on which he built a hut. Here he dwelt for many years, his pursuers believing him dead, or fled beyond the seas into France. But his life was not one of idleness; he

soon made his name well known among the rude fishermen of the coast, and drew them around him, ministering to them, and affording them medical aid, for he was learned in the healing art as practised at that time. He lived to extreme old age, and after his death the island was regarded almost as sacred by the people who knew his history, and in memory of the exile to whom it had afforded a shelter they called it the Bishop's Island, which name it retains to this day.

The coast of Clare is bold, barren, and desolate, in the neighbourhood of Killard. Nothing but heroic cliffs could withstand the unimpeded fury of the Atlantic. For miles inland there is no vegetation on the land but unprofitable moss like grass. No tree, or shrub, or plant rises to break the dull monotony of plain. The coast line is ragged

and torn into huge chasms by the sea. At Killard the cliffs rise two hundred and fifty feet sheer out of the water. The village is built around a little bay, whose waters are secured against the violence of the exterior billows by a low chain of rocks running across the mouth of the bay, and having two narrow openings through which boats may pass.

Although the rocks and cliffs now fronting the sea are extremely hard and durable, there must have been soft fissures in them ages ago, for the whole coast is pierced with caves and cloven into abrupt chasms. These caves vary in kind and form. Some are mere shafts reaching to no considerable distance. Others vast and intricate labyrinths, with suites of chambers, into whose gloomy depths the murmur of the wildest storm never penetrates, whose black myste-

rious waters are never stirred by a ripple from the ocean. Frequently the roofs reach to prodigious heights, and looking upward, it is impossible to believe the cliffs can afford roofs for such unexplorable vaults of darkness. In many cases the caverns ate through the solid rock until the roofs fell in, leaving a network of dangerous fissures exposed. This last phenomenon has given birth to a number of small pillar-like islands, which rise from the sudden depths of the sea, and have summits level with the surrounding cliffs. Of such origin is the Bishop's Island.

It is almost flat. The inner semi-circular edge roughly corresponds to a little semi-circular bay in which the island stands. The outer edge is more broken, and has a deep depression in the middle. The inner wall is perpendicular, the outer abrupt and

precipitous. On the latter, about twenty feet above highwater-mark, there is a narrow ledge. By means of a cleft in the face it is possible to descend from the level of the island to this ledge, but the path is extremely steep and dangerous.

In the depression on the outer side stands the low stone hut built by the bishop. Owing to the hollow in which it lies, no one can see it from the shore.

The construction of the hut is peculiar. It is formed of large stones, cemented together with a light, grey mortar, such as may be found in the ecclesiastical buildings of two hundred years ago. The walls are thick and unplastered on either the outer or inner side. The roof, formed of huge flags, has grown green with moss, and, suppose it were possible to see it from the shore, it could not readily be distinguished from the green vel-

vet cap of the island. The interior of the hut is divided into two chambers, each about twelve feet square, and having no door of communication from one to the other. Thus it is necessary to walk round one side of the hut in passing from room to room. In the partition wall, which, like the exterior ones, is very thick, is a deep fireplace for each room. The two chimneys are connected into one flue, carried in a curved line to the cope of the roof, from which the smoke escapes into the air without the aid of a chimney-pot.

Unlike his father, David Lane did not pass through Killard on his return from the inland. The villagers never could ascertain the time exactly at which he once more reached the Island, but towards the middle of January in the new year, Tom the Fool came one day running to a group of fisher-

men, who stood on the wet strand of the little bay of Killard. As soon as he was within speaking distance, he threw up his hands and shouted as well as his distressed breathing would allow him :—

"He's there! he's there again, he and she!"

"Who?" demanded one of the fishermen.

When Tom happened to be greatly excited he invariably employed pronouns for nouns, as though he fancied other people should see as clearly as he the images before his imagination.

"Lane, David Lane, David Lane, the dummy of the Bishop's Island, and his wife, a dummy too."

It was another peculiarity of Tom's, that when once he found people did not understand whom he meant by "he" or "she," he became unnecessarily explicit, his accents

at the same time rising, and his eyes glowing through their vacuous dulness in a kind of wild protest against the stupidity of those around.

"What is she like, Tom?" demanded another of the fishermen, as he shifted his pipe from one side of his mouth to the other, and lazily stooped to raise a cork float off the net at his feet.

"Well made and likely, with a yellow skin and white teeth, and red in her cheeks, and the sound of her dumb voice, and the hearing of her deaf ears in the fire of her brown eyes."

"Faith, Tom!" cried the fisherman who had last spoken, as he straightened his body and winked at his comrades; "but I think 'tis jealous of you David Lane would be if he *heard* you say those words."

For a moment the unshapely frame of the

Fool shook with rage; then words rushed from him so quickly one upon the heels of the other, that it was difficult to follow him.

"How dare you say that! how dare you say that! You! Do you hear? David Lane is my friend, and his wife's good name is my friend, let who will gainsay me and suffer. And the Bishop's Island is my friend, and all the fish that come to his lines are my friends, and the airs above the Bishop's Island are my friends. All—all! all friends. And often when my she-wolf of a grandmother threshes the island with the thousand flails of the wind, and scoops up the water in her skinny hands and tries to dash the water over the island and wash away my friend, I lie upon the cliffs with my chin over the sea, and laugh to hear that old she-wolf yell in the storm as the waters fall down again and leave the island and my friend

safe. Ah, you villainous old hag!" he shook his fists at the dull, grey mists beyond the bar, "I'll meet you for all this yet; I'll be even with you for what you do for me and my friends. I'll hand the faggots to burn up your wrinkled wickedness."

He was foaming at the mouth, and his dull, pale face had grown white with rage. The vacant eyes were perplexed with heat, but no fire came. Like the white vapour hanging over the place where a fire has been extinguished with water, the opaque heat was smoke from the ashes of reason extinguished for ever.

The fishermen were somewhat startled and awed by this outburst, and they considered it prudent to pursue the jesting no further.

From that time forward the slightest approach to this subject roused Tom into fury, transcending even that occasioned by

his persecution at the hands of that "old she-wolf" of his disordered imagination.

When Pat Casey heard that the bridal party had reached the Island, he turned to his wife and said, "That's a change on old Lane's plan. I hope there will be another change, too, and that we shan't let our back-room to him who was born in it."

The spring and summer months of that year passed away without any remarkable event in the village of Killard. No one ever crossed from shore to the Island except Tom the Fool, and Lane's wife had never been down to the village. Hence, beyond what Tom told, there was little known of her. Tom was reticent, and seemed to see in any question, however guarded, an attempt to repeat the old insinuation. True, some fishermen reported that once, from a distance, they had seen a woman's figure on the low

ledge of the Island, but the distance had been too great to allow of any particulars being gathered. It would be possible for anyone on cliffs near the Island to see a person on the level ground above the hut, and during the time David Lane had been seen there more than once; but people seldom went along the barren cliffs. The road which led from Killard to Clonmore, the town in which the village sold its fish, went from the centre of the latter at right angles to the coast-line of the bay.

In the meantime, Edward Martin had been taken into the employment of Cantillon, and now fished in one of the latter's boats. The young man lived at the end of the village furthest from Cantillon's house, that is to say, at the other side of the little bay. He had made a most favourable impression on his master. The elder man saw in him a resolute spirit and a good heart.

Mrs. Cantillon, too, had taken a liking to him, partly because of his gentle, sad manners, and partly because she felt he had been sent to them as a kind of substitute for his dead brother. This latter thought caused her to behave towards him more like a mother than a master's wife. Often in the evening, when the boats had been hauled in on the strand and the oars carried away, and the fish sent up to Casey's, from which place the cart for town started, the young man found his way to his employer's house, and sitting in the wide chimney-corner, or upon the bench facing the sea at the back of the house, the family and he talked over such little news as their monotonous lives afforded, or as reached them, wonderfully transformed, from the great outward world of Clonmore.

It may be that as the winter slipped

into the spring, and the spring into summer, there gradually grew upon the young man a feeling of interest in the quiet subdued light-haired daughter of Cantillon. He looked upon her as a child, but in his quiet nature there lay, out of his own knowledge, a certain crouched sentiment, which, when time had drawn the child into girlhood, might awake and rouse up and teach him to regard her with different eyes.

The year's fishing had been successful. Mrs. Cantillon said Edward Martin had brought them luck, at all events matters had gone so well that towards the end of September, the fisherman made up his mind to build an additional currach for the next year. So he set out for the city of Limerick, to purchase nets and gear, and canvas. He was gone a whole week.

Upon his return, after embracing his

wife and daughter, and settling himself comfortably in the chimney-place, and answering some questions concerning the wonderful sights afforded by the wonderful city, the eagerness to know died out much sooner in his wife than he had anticipated, and before he had well broken into his magazine of astounding facts disclosed to his eyes and ears in his travels.

"There's nothing the matter, Biddy?" he asked, looking in surprise from daughter to wife. "Nothing amiss with you here, or anyone down at the village? Tell me."

"Oh, no! there's nothing wrong; at least nothing wrong that anyone is to blame for, barring those who have to say to it, and they're outside sorrow."

"What is it? Come, tell me! Don't be making me wander all over misfortune to try what would frighten me most."

He turned to his daughter, "What is it Mary?"

"It isn't a fit thing for the child to talk about, if she can't help hearing such scandals."

"Whe-e-ew," he whistled. "I'm sorry, whoever she is."

"It's no she, but a he," explained the woman, in acrimonious mystery; the acrimony being for the offender, the mystery for her husband.

"A man! Who is he, and what has he done?"

"No man, but a child, and he hasn't done anything, as yet."

"Upon my conscience, Biddy, but you're saying a lot, and telling me little. Why don't you speak out at once? A boy that hasn't done any wrong, but is going to in his own good time! I feel like a blind

horse at the bottom of a stone quarry, with no neighbour near to ask the way out."

The family were sitting in the huge chimney-place, the daughter beside her father, the mother opposite to him.

"There was one good thing done anyway;" continued the woman, looking calmly into the fire as though she were communing with herself.

"All right, Bridget," said Cantillon, rising; "I'm going down to Pat Casey's to hear the news, and when I come back I'll tell you all about it." Casey's discharged the duty of circulating library to Killard. The freshest news of the village was always to be found there duly elaborated and edited.

At the man's threat Mrs. Cantillon turned towards him, and said, "You haven't had a blast of the pipe since you came in,

John. Mary, get your father his tobacco, and I'll bring my knitting."

The husband understood what this meant, smiled quietly at his daughter, and dropped, with an expression of relief and resignation, to his seat.

When the needles had been set to work and the blue tobacco smoke rose slowly into the capacious flue, Mrs. Cantillon began:—

"The evening after you started for Limerick, who should come down to Casey's but David Lane, Tom the Fool and David Lane's wife; and, to make a long story short, he hired the back room for a fortnight, and paid Pat Casey's wife ten shillings down on the spot.

"When I heard of this, I took a basket in my hand and went down for some turf. David Lane was out at the time, but I

found his wife in the back room; she isn't a bit like his mother, but healthy looking and well favoured and strong.

"As you may understand, there were few words between her and me; but she looked friendly, and glad to see me; no wonder; she hasn't seen the face of living woman for nearly a year. Do all I might I couldn't help pitying the poor afflicted creature. It is no blame to her, I dare say, to be dumb; and as to her marrying David Lane, maybe, she had no choice, but was forced into it by her people to get rid of her. I took her hand and smoothed her hair, which is very brown and bright. She smiled. She was sitting on a chair near the window looking into the back yard.

"While I was keeping her company, in comes Lane, looking very cross at me, and carrying a large stick, with a heavy

nob on the end of it. The couple made signs to one another, and then he seemed to be aware of his bad manners and unreasonableness, for he came over and caught my hand and squeezed it, and then put his wife's in mine. I am free to confess that I felt a kind of leaning towards them then, taking into account what was going to happen; and bad as things were, worse wouldn't better them, as the saying goes.

"Well, after a while, I left, and as I was coming out whom should I meet but Kitty Heffernan. She said to me, 'he,' meaning David Lane, 'sent Tom the Fool to me, and I'm to stay a fortnight. You know, Mrs. Cantillon, it isn't for one like me to say, No. I daren't but come out of regard to the unborn, not to think of anything else.'

"Well, to make a long story short——"

"Faith!" broke in her husband, "I don't

see much sign of the shortness. I'd bet a penny on you against any woman in the parish to give a story its natural dimensions, and put Kitty Heffernan herself to it, and I know what she can do at a yarn since our Mary was sent to us, bless the day!" He put his arm affectionately round his daughter and drew her to him, and kissed her fresh young cheek.

Mrs. Cantillon took no heed of the interruption, but went on:—

"Two days after, that was Friday last, Mrs. Casey sent up for me, and I went down. David Lane could hardly be kept out of the room, it was as much as Tom could do to make him stay in the shop. Nelly Casey said it would be no more than a duty for some one from the village to be with the poor creature, so I went in.

"'Now,' said Kitty Heffernan, the minute

I was in the room, 'bolt the door, Mrs. Cantillon, and draw the dresser across it.'

"I did as I was bid, wondering the whole time what could be the meaning of all this——"

"That's just my disease at present," interrupted the husband. "I'm wondering what all this is about."

She coughed, in half-protesting recognition of his intrusion upon her narrative, and went on :—

"As soon as the door was bolted, and the dresser drawn across it, I walked over to the window looking into the back yard, and who should I see standing in the yard, watching the window, but Edward Martin. He was just in front of the stable door, and every now and then he turned round from the window, and spoke to some one in the stable. I could not see who this person was. When

Edward Martin saw me at the window, he smiled and nodded his head and pointed to the stable, as much as to say, 'it's all right,' but what he was driving at or intending to mean I hadn't the ghost of a glimmer."

"My disease all over again, only I'm getting to know less and less the more you say," the husband muttered, with a low laugh.

"I cannot make or mar what was, and I'm telling you as it fell out. Be easy. Well, to make a long story short——"

"You will have your joke, Biddy; far be it from me to gainsay you. But go on, anyway, either making a long story short or a short story long. What brought Edward Martin into Pat Casey's back yard is where I'm blackest lost."

"You're to hear shortly."

"Amen!"

"In about two hours (Edward Martin standing in the same place all the time, and talking, now and then, over his shoulder) there were four instead of three living beings in the room. Kitty Heffernan said to me, after a time, 'wrap up the child in that flannel there, and hand him through the window to young Martin, outside.'

"I was struck all of a heap with surprise, and, moreover, I feared something wrong might be intended. 'What for?' I asked, and I knew my thoughts were on my face, plain to see.

"'Don't ask me now, dear, I'm not to say. I'll tell you before you leave this room, but not at present. You're not afraid Edward Martin would have a hand in any wickedness? What's going to be done is all for the best, and no harm will come to the child.'

"Thinking over everything, and remem-

bering that Kitty Heffernan was a good and heartful woman, and would injure no one, and that Edward Martin would stand idle if goodness wasn't wanting his arms, not to speak of his doing evil, I made up my mind, wrapped the new-born infant in the flannel and handed him through the window to Edward Martin, without opening my lips.

"The young man took the child as tenderly as a woman might, and carried him across the yard into the stable.

" Kitty stood by the bedside of the mother, and I remained at the open window. I was going to put it down, but Kitty said, ' Don't.' That's all was spoken in the room, and I left the window up.

" In a few minutes, Edward Martin came out of the stable, carrying the new-born as tenderly as a woman might. Just as he handed me the child through the window I saw Father

Murtagh leave the stable and cross the yard. He was very pale, and trembled all over; but his face was more quiet, and his eyes more satisfied than I have seen them for many a long day. As he went round the corner of the house he lifted his two clasped hands to Heaven, and his face was full of thankfulness. Father Murtagh passed out of my sight as I took the child from the arms of Edward Martin.

"I came back and laid the new-born by the side of the mother.

"'Now,' said Kitty Heffernan, 'you may go. Let David Lane know he has a son; but you are not to let Tom the Fool hear that Father Murtagh has baptized him in the stable, yonder. And that's the story of the heir to the Bishop's Island."

"Well, I'm glad it is a Christian heir this time," responded the husband. "May-

be, good will come of this. But there is nothing in the story Mary might not know of."

"It's my belief that no good will come of this boy," said the wife.

"Is he deaf?"

"I don't know, but he can't talk."

"Small blame to him for that as yet, although the family has great savings of talk for them somewhere."

"And other savings, too. I saw three gold pounds with Lane."

"Faith! if the new-born boy comes in for all the savings of the talk and gold he'll be a wonderfully rich man and a speech-maker."

"There now," said his wife, "leave off, and don't be joking about such people."

"I'm not joking at all. I'm wondering; that's no sin."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF CLONMORE.

In the year 1854, that is to say a decade after events recorded in the last chapter, there lived in a dingy, unwholesome street near the old cathedral of Limerick, an elderly man described as a "gentleman," for he did not work at any trade or profession. If he had been asked to furnish a reason why he should not fall out of the world's economy, he would have replied that he was a philosopher. Among the poor and

uneducated people surrounding him he passed for a miracle of learning; for there was no event or circumstance or fact latent or passing, that he could not clothe in half-a-dozen names, not one of which conveyed a more definite idea to his hearers than that the speaker was a very learned man and ought to be in the church, or the law-courts, or parliament, according to the subject he treated of. He was tall, erect, thin, with dull white complexion and small round restless eyes.

He lived in a large bleak upper back room; across its threshold none of those who knew him ever passed.

As far as his neighbours could learn, he had no friends nearer than those with whom the supplying of his slight daily wants, or chance meeting, brought him into contact. And yet no man was less independent of

society. He would converse freely and fully with any man, woman, or child fortune threw in his way. He was the most simple and guileless of men, and although he considered the whole circle of science and art lay revealed to him, he assumed no airs beyond one of bland, impartial, imperturbable infallibility. When mention of any branch of thought, or enquiry, or discovery unknown to him by name arose in his presence, he declared it to be either an ignoble superstition, a vulgar invention, or an idle and fruitless divergence of the school-men from the broad and open paths of knowledge.

Of each one of the score of languages spoken of now and then by ordinary people he knew some facts, such as the number of letters employed, its supposed origin, its manner of declining participles or conjugating verbs, or, perhaps, he could quote a few words;

and with this he seemed, in his own mind, to have a master-key whereby he, next month, purposed entering thoroughly into all its intricacies and delicacies, expounding all riddles hitherto unsolved.

Often when pressed by some stray student or schoolboy for a translation of an obscure passage in a book at a stall, he would pause to deliver a lecture on the language itself or the author, or the style of binding employed in the early Venetian books as contrasted with the mean arts and florid styles in vogue to-day.

When his monologue was completed he would hasten away at the beckoning of some profound science whose existence depended on his fostering care. In his own bare room there were no books. Had he not in his head a library perfect and always at hand wheresoever he went, and mere printed

books were simply symbolic idols of the spiritual faith of knowledge within his brain.

This gentle philosopher had, early in life, devoted himself vaguely to learning; but, as the years went on, his mind had not developed proportionately to the guests he had so studiously invited, and things had come to a deadlock. His name was James Heywood, and he upheld his right to the title of gentleman by reason of property yielding forty pounds a year, in the town of Clonmore. This property consisted of four small houses in a street off the Square.

In 1854 Mr. James Heywood resolved to leave the city and live in the town, for one of his houses had fallen idle; no new tenant could be procured; the town was declining fast. If he resided in the house now vacant

he should save rent and be the better able to take care of his estate, besides avoiding the expense of an agent. Therefore, in July of the year he came to Clonmore, and entered into occupation of the unlet house.

However the learned might have been disposed to regard Mr. Heywood's claim to the title of philosopher, no one could dispute it to that of gentleman. He was kindly and loquacious to all, and, perhaps, his philosophy had helped him to see equality throughout the whole human race, or some faculty of his nature bound him to look on mankind as his brethren; at all events he had but one set of manners.

Whether the abstractions over which his life had been spent had weakened or effaced all perception of social distinction is a question hard to settle; but there was to be observed in him no apprehension of caste.

Moreover, so simple and unobservant was he of objective matters that moral turpitude lay either outside his system and was unappreciated, or he had grown to regard the faults of mankind as matters for which he could not be held responsible, and over which he had received no commission to sit as judge. If fate had cast him in the company of felons he would have spoken and behaved as though they were clergymen in orders. If he and a Kaffir who had abjured cannibalism were the sole inhabitants of a Pacific island he would have taught the Kaffir English, and as soon as his fellow islander knew twenty words of the dialect he would have addressed him on abstruse physics and metaphysics.

At the time James Heywood, gentleman, came to reside at Clonmore there was in the town another man who, as far as the quali-

fication of doing nothing for his daily bread constitutes a gentleman, was a gentleman; but beyond this qualification he possessed no other claim to be so described. His name was Christopher Cahill. His father had been a bailiff of the late Lord Clonmore. Years ago the father had died; but although the office had been hereditary in the Cahill family, for generations, young Christopher had not been appointed. In the public mind there was no well-defined indictment against young Cahill. He had never done anything to bring himself under severe censure.

In appearance he was thick-set, muscular and heavy. His face was a dull brick-red and his hair jet-black. It was hard to remember the colour of his eyes, for they were rarely straight before an observer for a second; they were not so much restless

as distracted. When he met any one he knew, though he would freely and gladly talk, still the interview seemed to disturb the business of the eyes, and they were instantly directed to the ground or a distant object on a line with themselves. In the year 1854, young Cahill, as he was generally called, appeared about seven and twenty years of age.

Over a little river flowing by the town of Clonmore, stretched a high stone bridge of five arches. The parapets were low and broad, and in the fine summer evenings many people walked to and fro on the bridge, enjoying the fresh airs flowing with the stream, and the prospect of the green level plain stretching east and west below the road. Young and old men sat on the parapet and smoked and chatted, or leaned lazily over to watch the salmon and trout

shooting in the green-blue waters beneath. To a gentleman living on his private fortune and devoting himself largely to philosophy and conversation, a more delicious haunt could scarcely be found than this New Bridge, as it was called; so Mr. James Heywood had not spent a whole week in Clonmore before he looked forward to his few hours of evening discourse on the New Bridge as the most useful of his day.

One night, early in August, Mr. Heywood stood alone on the bridge. It was close to midnight; all the other loungers had gone back into the town, but he still lingered in hope of finding some one going in the direction of his home. He leaned his elbows on the parapet and gazed into the dim waters murmuring below. Presently footsteps arose upon the silence, and in a little while he turned and saw the

figure of a man approaching from the end of the bridge opposite the town. As the man drew near Mr. Heywood rose and said, "Good night!"

"Oh, Mr. Heywood! is that you? I did not know you in the dark. What a beautiful night it is!" responded the other deferentially.

"And I did not recognise you, Mr. Cahill, until you spoke. I am glad to meet you. We are both going the same way and can walk home together."

"I'm only too proud, sir," returned Cahill, in a tone of humble self-congratulation at the pleasure and honour in store for him.

"I was observing the water," continued the philosopher, pointing to the vague depths of air and river, "and thinking what a wonderful thing it is. Of old it was con-

sidered to be an element, but recent scientific research has proved it to consist of two gases."

"Oh!" mildly interpolated his hearer, as though he had never held water in very high esteem; and after learning of its former deceitfulness was now prepared to hear with pleasure anything to its further disadvantage.

"There are, Mr. Cahill, most singular things stated in the books about water. Extreme cold, as you know, converts it into ice; extreme heat into steam. Burning mountains, or volcanoes as the learned call them, throw up large masses of cold water, and cold ground expels hot. Its effect on the human frame is marvellous, whether in external or internal application; and it is capable of influencing to a wonderful degree the human mind."

"No?" enquired Cahill with anxious curiosity. They were now walking in the direction of Clonmore. At the mention of the effect of water on the human frame and mind, the younger man had started into eager attention. His steps became slower and slower, and the eyes which rarely dealt with a companion now rested half wondering, half fearfully, on the old man. "And do you tell me," he asked the philosopher, after a long ramble of the latter's into the history of water, "that it has anything to do with the mind?"

"Oh dear, yes!" promptly replied the other. "Men have been healed of madness by sea voyages; driven mad by looking continually at large plains of liquiform oxygen and hydrogen—the two elementary gases which compose the well-known fluid. A man in whose dungeon beneath the moat

of an ancient castle there fell drops of water which sounded like 'trick-track,' went mad because they would not, even once in months, fall like 'track-trick,' proving the deadly power of iambic feet on the intellect of human beings. Those who read iambics continually are mostly of feeble intellect; those who continually write them, mad. After iambics the mind requires trochees, or it's all over with sanity. Then there was another man driven mad by having a single drop of water let fall on his head at regular intervals."

"What a wonderful thing book-learning is, to be sure! And tell me, sir, for you know everything——"

"Oh dear, no! Only the foundation of knowledge—not everything. No one can know everything." There was more

repudiation in the words than in the tone.

"Did you, sir," Christopher Cahill was becoming abjectly humble as his interest increased, "in all your reading, ever meet with an account of water turning people that could talk into dummies, or making them wish to have dumb children?"

"Science cannot deal with anything that is not; and no metaphysician with whose works I am familiar,—in fact, I may say no metaphysician at all, has ever yet investigated the problem circumscribed by the mental or physical condition of children, say, seven years before they are born. Let me warn you against the schoolmen in this important enquiry. They are likely to have a theory on the subject, but neither they nor their theories are to be trusted in the slightest degree. All they have to say on

any subject is a mass of disintegrated froth."

"And is there nothing about it anywhere?"

"Yes, in the poets. In the epic, but not in the didactic or pastoral poets, we frequently meet with people who are said to be—mind, *said* to be—struck dumb by the sight of the ocean; but then, you know, it is only a figure of speech to say so."

"Don't it seem a queer figure of speech to strike a man dumb?" asked Cahill in a reverential puzzle.

"No doubt. But then you can never in the slightest degree rely on the poets, especially the epic poets. Poetry makes what may never have been, seem to be; science—well, science, when it meets religion, often makes some people believe that what never was has been. Let me make

it plain to you. All poetry would be uninterrupted iambics; all science would be uninterrupted trochees, and either, recurring incessantly, would drive men mad. You must have both; to make it still simpler to you, religion must put in the stops. Now do you understand?"

"Better than if I was bred and born in Trinity College, and never took a meal out of doors," returned Cahill ruefully. It had been unannotated Greek to him.

"I'm glad I have been of service to you."

"Mr. Heywood, could you tell the difference between a man who is mad and a man who is a dummy?"

"Unquestionably. A man who is a deaf mute (which is an expression preferable to the one you have employed) utters inarticulate sounds; a man who is mad utters inconsequential words. I hope that sets your mind at rest?"

"It's as much at rest as the mind of a sleeping infant," responded Cahill still more ruefully. It was Chaldee this time.

They had now reached Mr. Heywood's door. They bade one another good night, and the philosopher was in the act of closing the door, when Cahill came running back.

"Mr. Heywood," he said, "some fine day soon I'm going over to Killard. There's a lot of wonderful scientific things to be seen there—the ocean, and great high rocks and sea-weed and the fishing-boats. There'll be no one with me but myself. Maybe you'd do me the honour of not refusing a seat on my car. I'm sure it would do you good, and you could look around the scientific wonders of the place."

The old man hesitated and considered awhile, then answered freely:—

"I shall be very happy indeed to go,

although I don't think anything there is likely to take me unawares. Good night." He retired, and Cahill was alone.

With his head drooped low, Cahill stood awhile. Then, rising out of deep thought, he muttered, as he turned and walked down the street:—

"I'll bring him face to face with David Lane; maybe he can make something out of it. Wherever I go, whatever way I turn, asleep or awake, David Lane and his property of the Bishop's Island are never far from me, and something whispers to me that it wasn't for nothing my father told me that history a hundred times, until I feel as if the history, and what caused the history, is my fate! my fate! my fate! And I'll know what is hidden of that history; my fortune lies in finding it out. I'll know it, or—"

He did not finish the sentence, for his

eyes at that moment caught sight of two men in front. He quickened his pace, until he was sufficiently near to make them out by the light of the stars.

Could it be? Yes, there was no doubt of it. Tom the Fool and David Lane were walking on before him in a street of Clonmore; and Lane had not been in that town for years, and never in the company of Tom. What could he want there now, and at such a time of night?

Cahill dropped a little to the rear, and pausing just long enough to allow of their getting beyond the sound of his footsteps, stole after them as quietly as his feet could fall.

CHAPTER VII.

"TEN GUINEAS!"

For a hundred yards or so the two men kept straight on. Then they turned into a by-street and disappeared from Cahill's sight. He ran, gained the corner, and peered cautiously down the way they had taken.

A few paces from the corner the two men stood in a doorway. The Fool, just as young Cahill looked, raised his arm and knocked.

"What can they want at Dillon's this

hour of night? Fishing tackle? But couldn't the Fool get that for Lane as he does for all the village?" Cahill whispered, as he slipped into a deep portico from which he could see without being observed.

For some time there was no response to the knocking. It was repeated thrice. Then a window above opened, and a head appeared, and a voice asked crossly, "Who's there! What do you want?"

"There's Dillon himself," muttered Cahill.

"It's only Tom the Fool and David Lane, of the Bishop's Island. Open the door. He has money to leave you."

"What an hour! Won't to-morrow do? This is no time for business." The shopkeeper's tones were not so rough as at first.

"No, no! To-morrow won't do. Luke Dillon, come down at once, or I'll go on my knees to that old she-wolf of a grandmother

of mine and ask her to send storms of hail, snow and wind on you and yours and your house."

The words were uttered fiercely and rapidly. As this threat of his always immediately preceded quarrelling, the head at the window was withdrawn, and in a few moments the door opened and the two entered.

Dillon's shop, lighted by only the candle the owner carried, looked like a lofty wine-vault festooned with enormous fungi. From hooks in the ceiling hung great misty fishing nets, long whips, bridles, hanks of cordage; here and there glittered columns of fishing-rods, with shadowy capitals of landing-nets; against the counter stood saddles on stands; against the walls, in racks, shone guns and blunderbusses; on the counter were powder-flasks.

The proprietor, a short, grey old man, turned to Tom and asked, in a querulous voice, "Now, what is it you want at this unseasonable hour of night?"

Before replying, Tom went up close to Dillon and put his hand on the old man's shoulder, "My friend David Lane wants to buy a gun."

"A gun!" cried the old man, in amazement. "A gun! For what?"

"To shoot sea-fowl on his own property, the Bishop's Island," returned Tom with dignity. Then, he added, fiercely, "and he's going to do his best for me against the old she-wolf; he promised me that. Now, are you answered, Luke Dillon?"

"But, but—"

"Ah! Is that the way you are, Luke Dillon? Maybe you'd like to have her at

first on trial for a month or two. She'd soon enough find out where the roof is bad and the sashes rotten; she'd soon scrape the putty out of the sashes and the mortar out of the slates. Tell me this, Luke Dillon, how would you like to be killed in your sins by a stack of chimneys falling through the floors? Tell me that, Luke Dillon; for she'd do that while a gull would be lifting a sprat out of a shoal!" The dull eyes of the Fool were looking fiercely into the blinking eyes of the old man, and the mute's muscles stood, as it were, at attention.

"But has he got a license? I daren't do it unless he has got a license. It would be as much as my own license is worth."

"He has gold to pay you with, and I have the silver of Killard at my back; and if you don't take the gold, you'll never see

another tenpenny of Killard's money, for I'll go to Blake's for tackle, and you'll have the winds of winter in summer on you and yours."

He made a few rapid gestures to his companion. The latter opened his hand towards the light. Several gold pieces glittered on the red palm.

Dillon stared in wonder. Where could the ragged man before him have got gold. Gold was almost unknown at Killard. Notes and silver and copper were to be found there in small quantities, but not one gold piece. There existed a prejudice against the yellow metal. The old man wavered for a moment. He counted the pieces with his eye; five, five sovereigns they seemed. But before he spoke he considered the risk. If any evil came of this gun what trouble there would be. This ignorant man, with a bad name,

living in the heart of some great secret,—this dumb desperate man, what could he want of a gun? Nothing good. Sea-fowl? They were almost valueless—that is, Lane could do nothing with them. To trust fire-arms into the hands of this outcast and this half-witted man? No! the risk was too great; he'd take none of it. Then he said, "I daren't do it! I daren't do it! And even if I did the police would take himself and the gun. No one can have firearms without a license. The district is proclaimed."

"You won't tell the police, I won't tell the police, he can't tell the police; as to the hag of wickedness, she can only blow and yell, but never say a word. Take the yellow gold and give the gun, or you're done with the gold and silver of Killard, and the storms will be your blankets to morrow

night. Give the gun, and at once, for we must be going; it's late, and we have to tramp the road to Killard before day. I want to steal back in the darkness or she'll see me. The boy is all by himself on the Island, and if the witch knew the father and I were away she'd raise a whirlwind and kill the boy. Give the man the gun, Luke Dillon!"

When Tom spoke in the interests of his friends the Lanes there always seemed to be some trace of reason in his words; he appeared capable of calculating the effect likely to be produced by certain thoughts or considerations. At other times he never looked outside himself, but spoke without any regard to effect.

"I won't, I won't!—and now that's all about it, and you may go."

The shopkeeper's voice and manner were now final. Tom made signs to Lane. Lane

looked doggedly at the old man and showed no intention of moving.

"Besides," continued the gunsmith, "you don't know how dear guns are. They cost pounds and pounds. Now here's one of the cheapest I have, and it's ten guineas."

He took down a wretched old fowling-piece, not worth a couple of sovereigns, and showed it to Lane. He thought, upon second consideration, that it would be better to ask an exorbitant price, one quite beyond Lane's power to pay, than to refuse point blank to sell.

A long pantomime ensued between the Fool and Lane. The bright sharp eyes of the deaf mute glittered with swift intelligence. He made rapid angry gestures, breathing hard the while. At length his friend seemed to comprehend.

"Ay, David Lane, you have a head; you

have a head!" he muttered with admiration and pride. "You carry the head and I carry the tongue. That's it! He carries the head and I carry the tongue. We are only the makings for one. The black hag scraped the sense out of my head and the speech off his tongue. There was only enough for one man between us, and she divided us into two, and there's only one head to plan and one tongue to ask for what two carcasses want."

This "aside" seemed to weary the mute. During its delivery he had been carelessly examining the piece by the light of the candle. He now placed the gun beside the candle and made signals to Tom.

"All right," replied the Fool, "let us go."

He opened the street door and stepped out. Lane, in following him, stumbled and

knocked the candle down and extinguished it. The mute stooped and groped about.

"Tom," said the old man in a tone of relief—he was glad to get rid of his visitors,—"tell him not to mind the candle; I'll find it myself."

The Fool re-entered, and, having touched Lane, the two were soon after in the street. As soon as they were gone Dillon shut the door and bolted it.

The old man went into the back room,—he did not like striking matches in the shop. Presently he returned with one burning in his hand. He sought and found the candle. When it was lighting he rose from his stooping position and reached out his hand for the gun. With an oath he started back. He was about to rush to the door and rouse the place and follow the two, when suddenly his eyes caught something glittering at the

distant end of the counter. Hastily he approached the spot.

The gun was gone, but on the counter lay ten pieces of gold. He took them up in blank wonderment. He weighed them dreamily on the ends of his fingers. Then suddenly the light came back to his eyes. Something peculiar in the coins riveted his attention, and he whispered in a low voice as though he doubted the evidence of his senses and expected to wake up in a moment and find it daylight:—

"I said ten guineas, ten guineas! thinking he had no more than five sovereigns. There were only five coins then in his hand. But these are not sovereigns but guineas! Ten golden guineas! Ten old-fashioned guineas!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A SOUND FROM THE ISLAND.

BETWEEN the years 1844 and 1854, famine and pestilence visited Ireland. People perished of hunger in the streets, in the fields, in the churches. They crawled from remote villages in the weary hope of obtaining food in the towns and cities, and were found dead by the wayside. Some who reached towns or cities by night and knew not whither to turn, lay down near bakehouses where bread was being made at midnight, and were taken away stiff and stark before

the first woman came to purchase. Men whose business took them abroad early, in the darkness, fell over the bodies of women taking their long rest on door steps. Haggard, wild-eyed spectres of men haunted the roads and streets, and desperate mothers clutched starving infants to their barren breasts.

Before the Blight beggars took offence if offered potatoes only, and potatoes rotted in trenches for sheer want of mouths to eat them. The Blight came, and those who had been donors to the poor gnawed cabbage stalks, or strove to allay the agony of starvation with grass and acorns and scraps of leather. In many districts there were for each day more people than loaves or potatoes, and from such places came hideous whispers, too awful for human lips to speak aloud.

In the wake of famine, pestilence crept to

the shore of the stricken land to finish the work of ruin. Time mowed with no sickle then, but with a broad and universal wind. There were no fields of men to slay and fields to spare; but, like a storm passing through orchards when the fruit is heavy, all the trees were shaken and each suffered loss. Burying the dead was a monotonous toil; morning, noon, and night, men were digging graves and others were filling them in. Often he who dug at dawn was covered in himself before sun-down.

In towns large wooden sheds were erected for those who fled the lonely fields that they might die in sight of man. Most of these fugitives from solitude, after a day or perhaps two days, found the sheds and died within the sight of human eyes. It was not a season for tears. People had no time to indulge sentiments. They sat pale and awe-

stricken; carefully, heedfully, watching and noting how the plague fluctuated, who fell; guarding themselves and those dear to them against risk, and swiftly burying the dead. Burying the dead by day and by night. Burying the dead calmly and resolutely, as though all reason for living had passed away, and there was only reason to die. Burying the dead in half envious despair. Burying the dead as though they cried, "These go to their brethren who are before them; but we remain to see all, all depart from us; our portion is the silent chamber and the deserted field. Are all we love to go before we go? Which of our kinsfolk shall we break earth for next? Here are our young daughters, our mothers, our wives, our lusty sons, our fathers. Call the roll! Pay no heed to the places vacant already. But which of those that answer now will fall asleep to morrow?

"Good bye, sweetheart! I am going a journey into the country, and shall not be with you for a week."

"A week! A whole weary week. How long!"

On the fourth day they buried him, and on the fifth they had forgotten where.

"He is but three days gone," she cried, "and I shall be three days gone away for ever before he returns. The shadow of night is gathering on my hands. Look! A week seemed long when he was going; and now a week has grown to Never!"

Never! Who said never? The world had conspired to separate them for a week, but in four days Heaven marred the conspiracy.

Those were times thick with sombre horrors in Ireland. Let us hope men may never see their like again.

The little village of Killard suffered severely from both the famine and pestilence. One-fourth of its inhabitants had fallen victims. Within seven days of each other, honest John Cantillon and his faithful wife Bridget came to the churchyard, never to depart until the general uprising. A month later, the wife of David Lane found there a quieter resting place than that afforded by the lonely hut on the Bishop's Island.

In the cottage of John Cantillon now dwelt Edward Martin and his wife Mary, daughter of Cantillon, with their little child, a fair-haired, blue-eyed girl of six years.

On the Island lived David Lane and his son, the latter being now ten years old. The boy was tall for his age, lank, long-limbed, uncouth. He possessed the hereditary bright eyes, but he showed no indication of the

muscular alertness of his father. He was slow to move. Such time as lay at his disposal he spent in the summer time lying on the short moss and looking at the sea; in winter he loved best to sit by the fire, his chief delight being to weave upon the darkness hoops and bows, and other designs, with a spray of glowing faggot. Often he would sit whole hours together gazing into the dull turf fire; at such times, when his father roused him by putting his hand on his son's shoulder, the boy would start and look up half alarmed, half displeased, as though he had been awakened out of a pleasant reverie. For some time before David Lane paid his midnight visit to Dillon's shop, there had been a marked change in the conduct of father to son. Since the hour the boy had been delivered into his father's hands by the stranger who brought him from the inland, the elder

Lane had treated the boy with the tenderness of a woman. He allowed him to do no rougher work than bait the hooks of the hand-lines. All else he did himself. He went to Killard and sold the fish, and bought the simple necessaries of their narrow home. He kindled the fire, cooked the food, and when it was very cold, made a fire in the chamber occupied by the boy. Frequently he would take his child fondly in his arms, and hold him softly to his breast, muttering inarticulate sounds over him.

Of late, although he still kept the boy from toil, he seemed to stand in fear of him, and his affectionate embraces grew very few, and became spasmodic. He would catch his son suddenly and press him wildly to him, and then, setting him down, regard him almost fiercely for a moment, cover his eyes, and rush hastily away. All this perplexed

the child. Sometimes, after one of those scenes, when the father returned, the boy would go up to him and wind his arms around him and gaze into his eyes with a sad questioning look, as though in protest. For a while the love of the parent predominated, and he would kiss the boy; then, when the latter moved his lips, the father concealed his face with one hand, and with the other repelled his son. All this troubled the child, and often as he sat by the fire, his hot tears made gleaming rainbows around the turf, and fell slowly on his listless hands.

This singular man, dwelling apart from all of the race save his child, separated from mankind by the terrible affliction his father had deliberately sought to place upon him, had centred the whole affection of his dark and stormy nature on his boy. He had

watched him day by day as he grew, and had solaced his soul with the thought of their continual intercourse. When he visited Killard his questioning eyes and hands were ever among children, if they were by. He enquired their ages, took them up and weighed them, felt their limbs curiously, and when the balance turned in favour of his own child, set them down with a proud smile. The people all declared, that whatever the crimes of the Lanes might be, this man loved his boy as few fathers loved theirs.

Now some canker had entered in. Some dark suspicion. Some half-developed dread. Yet no alteration was visible in the boy. Tom the Fool, who was strangely quick to notice everything connected with his friends, saw the alteration and wondered. But he was reticent in all things concerning the

deaf mute and his son, and told nothing about it in the village. People said the Fool was jealous of his friendship with the Lanes, and in his nebulous mind there lay a band of exclusion round the Bishop's, and he would allow no one inside this band. Tom had frequently interrogated Lane, but could get no reply. The father seemed to deny the alteration, and was always angry when the Fool questioned him. Latterly Tom had been seldom a visitor to the Island. Often a whole month passed without his once leaving the mainland.

It was broad daylight when David Lane, carrying the gun, arrived opposite the Bishop's. He had paid Dillon five times the value of the gun, but it was not till next morning the gunsmith discovered that with the gun had disappeared a half-pound canister of powder. This canister was now in Lane's pocket.

Lane threw the gun down, and standing on the edge of the cliff, looked round, as if to make sure no one watched his movements. Not a soul was in sight. At the point where he stood, the distance from the mainland to the island was no more than sixty feet. It seemed almost possible to jump across. Two hundred feet below groaned and churned the never-quiet waters of the Atlantic. In the brightest day the sun never reached the bottom of this chasm, and it was always filled with a dim grey darkness, like the blue bloom under trees in summer. Down the side of the Island, directly opposite where Lane stood, hung a rope with a loop at the end, and from the loop depended a confused tangle of cordage. The villagers knew that this rope formed the bridge. They had often seen him cross from the Island, but none had ever seen him return.

Having satisfied himself that he was unobserved, Lane stooped, and with his hands removed some clay a few feet from the brink. A large iron hook was disclosed. The eye of the hook pointed inland. Two large iron bolts, driven into the ground, held the hook firmly in its place.

So much the villagers knew, and further, that he, when wanting to leave his home, cast that loop over the hook, and crossed under the rope. But they did not know how, when he was once over, and had cast back the rope, he ever re-formed his bridge. How did he get the loop back again? Often, when feeling ran high against the Lanes, the people had talked of coming in the night and tearing up this hook, and so cutting him completely off. But there was an aspect of murder about the idea, and they forbore.

Lane now thrust his hand into his bosom, and drew forth a small bundle of fishing line. This he quickly unwound. It was twenty yards long, and in the centre lay what fishermen call a stroke-haul, that is, three hooks tied together, so as to resemble a small grappling-iron. From the end of the stroke-haul depended a bullet as sinker. Again he looked suspiciously around. Then, peering into the dim depths of the chasm, he commenced slowly paying out the line.

The face of the cliff was so sheer that, when the line all but about a yard was run out, the stroke-haul swung free of the rock. He looked carefully over the edge. The eye could not discern the line at more than half its length, and even the bullet had disappeared. Holding the line out at arm's length, he walked a few paces along the very brink. Then suddenly the line

tightened. He wound up a few yards of it, and drawing it in cautiously, returned to his old station.

Then he took in the line hand over hand. Before half of it lay beside him on the cliff, the rope hanging from the Island began to stretch across the rift towards where he stood. With a jerk, the stroke-haul came into view, and in one of the hooks rested a loop of fine black cord. Taking this cord in his hand, he pulled vigorously, and in less than a minute the eye of the rope came up.

Thirty feet down the cliff was a fissure, and in this fissure a small bar of iron, and attached to this bar of iron the cord to which the rope was tied. The bar might be placed there by lowering it from the cliff into the fissure. The dimness of the chasm made it impossible to see the black cord.

Having secured the loop to the hook, he pushed the tangle of cords which had hung from it out on the rope until it hung over the brink. It formed a rude network of five meshes, each mesh being about a foot wide.

Into this network he crept head foremost, taking the gun with him, and facing downwards. As soon as he was fully in he turned, faced the pale blue morning sky, and seizing the rope with his hands and feet, worked himself across with surprising swiftness and ease. As soon as he had landed, he, by a vigorous shake, communicated an upward serpentine wave to the rope, at the same moment lowering his hand to the ground. The loop spread out of the hook, and the rope fell to its old position. Thus the Island was once more cast loose into isolation.

Lane paused a moment, turned round, and inspected the Island narrowly, apparently to his satisfaction. Then he crossed the summit, and opening the door of his chamber, entered it.

The yellow sun stood over the level downs. Far out on the sea reached the dark green water in the heavy shadow of the cliffs. Beyond the shadow the ocean lay, a blue sheet of radiance under a cloudless sky. The dews were ascending from the brittle grass.

Beneath the summits of the gigantic rocks sea-fowl cried as they flew slowly from the land. No object broke the vast expanse of ocean. No sound fell into the vacant vault of heaven, save the cries of the birds. Peace reigned over all the scene, as though no conflict of tempest ever racked the coast; as though the message of peace to

man was written in colossal characters on the face of nature.

In the small chamber facing the south slept the boy. He knew nothing of his father's visit to Clonmore. The man had left the Island without letting his son know of his intention. During the previous day, the manner of the father had been more excited than ever. One of those scenes had occurred between the two. While Lane was preparing the midday meal of potatoes and fish, an accident occurred. The boy was sitting before the fire watching the fish frying. The father, behind him, held an earthen plate in his hand. Suddenly it slipped from his grasp, and was broken into fragments on the hard earthen floor. With an inarticulate cry, the father turned round to claim his son's attention; but his eyes no sooner met the

figure of the child than he sprang back with a yell. The boy had already risen, and stood regarding the fragments.

A wild fury sprang into Lane's eyes. He rushed at the boy, and, raising his arm, struck him heavily. In all that had been before, nothing like this had occurred. A blow! a blow, and no blame attributable to him!

For an instant the boy drew himself up, and glared defiance at his father. Then all the anger went out of his face, and with a loud sob of pain and grief he threw himself on his father's bed, and covered his head with the clothes.

The man stood, and buried his wild bright eyes in the prostrate form. His whole frame shook with passion. His chest heaved, and through his dilated nostrils he breathed fiercely.

Then, almost as suddenly as it had come,

his passion deserted him. The fury left his eyes, the rigidity of countenance gave place to softness, after which came a look of almost awful tenderness and regret; then, with a hoarse moan, he flung himself beside the child, and seized him in his arms and wept over him like a mother.

The boy's chamber was no more than twelve feet square. The walls were rough, unplastered. The stout beams supporting the roof were seven feet from the ground at their least height. Unlike cottages of far greater dimensions, this hut had a fire-grate of four iron bars in each room. The chamber occupied by the boy had been the cell of the Bishop. In it there was but one small window, and that looked south. The furniture was scanty; it consisted of a small deal table, an old-fashioned bedstead without its roof, two chairs, and a three-

legged stool. Against the wall hung a piece of looking-glass.

The boy was fast asleep. His chest and arms were bare; his head drooped forward; a faint smile rested on his lips, and down his cheeks were tear-stains. Already fact had proved to this child more harsh than fiction. The sleeping delusions were sweet, the waking realities bitter.

In one hand he held a heavy clasp-knife. Before going to bed, he had taken it out of his pocket, and fondled it, and when he lay down he kept it close to his cheek. Perhaps the salt waters of the ocean had made the red spot visible on the back of the spring; perhaps the warm tears. But now the tears were dry, and he was smiling in his dreams. Maybe he was once more living through the happy moment when his father, taking him on his knee, first dis-

closed the wonders of that great clasp-knife to him, opened out all the blades, the miniature saw, the tiny gimlet, the slender marlinspike; and when all were shown, and their uses illustrated, handed him the miracle, and patted his head, and pressed him in his arms.

Suddenly the door of the boy's room opened, and David Lane entered. It was near seven o'clock. The boy was usually stirring at that hour. He must have lain awake long.

The father came and stood by the bedside. He saw the tear-stains and the clasp-knife, and he seemed to understand. Awhile he stood with his arms folded on his broad chest, regarding his son with a dull sad face. The door behind him remained open, and through the doorway entered the broad pure light of morning. The foot of

the bed was almost opposite the doorway, and the light struck fully on the boy's smiling face. Evidently Lane feared it might wake him, for, stretching his hand back, he closed the door.

Instantly the smile passed off the countenance of the sleeper and a gloom flitted across it. Then with a wail, the boy started, leaned upon his elbow, and looked fearfully at his father. The two remained motionless for a time. With a sigh that shook him from head to foot, the father made a sign to the boy to rise, and left the cell.

David Lane went back to his own chamber and bolted the door. He took out the gun from under his bed and proceeded to load it. He had seen men shoot birds on the beach of Killard, and knew how to charge the weapon. He poured in a large

charge of powder, upon which he rammed down a piece of rag. Then from a box he drew forth some hand-lines, and cutting off one of the bullet sinkers, found with satisfaction that it fitted the barrel. When the bullet had been dropped down, he drove in another piece of rag, and then raised the cock.

After this he paused a long while in thought. At length he lifted his head suddenly and smiled, and shook his head in self-approval. From the box wherein he had found the bullet, he now took a piece of thin sheet-lead of which the lighter kind of sinkers are made. He cut off a small square piece, and by the aid of a spray of faggot, fashioned this into a little cap. Into this he peeled the phosphorous composition from the head of a lucifer match, and when this was done, dropped the cap over the nipple

of the gun. After that he placed the gun, without lowering the hammer, under the bed, stood a while in an attitude of thought, with his hand to his brow. His eyes grew gradually dim, his hand fell, his whole frame relaxed, and stretching out his arms as if to embrace his boy, he burst into tears.

The village of Killard was by this time awake and stirring. The boats had been out all night, and came home deep laden with fish. Under the silvery light of the morning, mackerel, and hake, and gurnet, and rockfish, and pollock and cod writhed and twisted on the yellow sand. There had been no better night all the summer, and the men were less rough and more playful than usual; the women, who had come to help their husbands and sons and brothers to carry the spoil to Pat Casey's, were demurer than the men.

Some saw in the dozen and a half hake a new handkerchief. Here, in this score of mackerel, was a new pair of boots for little Jack. Those four fine cod could not do less than obtain the material for a pair of serge trousers for the man of the house.

There was much talk and laughter among the men as they smoked their short clay pipes, while the women sorted the fish. But the women had weighty matters on their minds, and spoke little, and resented badinage from the men with a kind of proud displeasure. To their minds it was not a time for levity, but for sorting the fish and maturing the wisest manner of bestowing the proceeds.

A little distance from the group of men and women a currach lay high and dry, bottom up on the sand. While the business of sorting the fish was at its height, this

currach began to move without any exterior aid. Looks and exclamations of surprise ran round. Presently a pair of large fat hands appeared, and then a head, followed by a clumsy ragged body, and after a little wriggling and spluttering, a pair of legs came into view, and a man scrambled to his feet.

"Is that you, Tom?" cried several voices at once, as the Fool, rubbing his eyes, confronted the little crowd.

"Faith, Tom," said Mrs. Martin, "it's careful you are of your complexion to make a sunshade of a currach when you're taking your morning stroll on your all-fours like an elderly crab."

"Whist!" cried Tom angrily; "don't be talking like a foolish woman. Mind your work, and sort the fish." He did not seem disposed to take jests pleasantly.

The woman laughed good-humouredly; "Your early rising won't do you much harm if your long fast doesn't spoil your figure."

"I tell you, stop; don't be talking."

"I think there must have been a crooked straw in your bed last night," she continued, pointing to the upturned currach; "you got up so cross." There was a general laugh.

"You'll be wanting goose-grease for sore lips yet, and won't have the price of it if you waste the skin of your tongue like that."

This time the laugh was against Mrs. Martin, but the success of the sally did not in the least diminish Tom's bad humour; if anything, it made it worse.

"Don't mind them, Tom," cried Edward Martin, in a soothing voice, as he ap-

proached the Fool. "Here's a gurnet for your breakfast. Go up to Pat Casey's and roast it at the kitchen fire."

"May you never, Edward Martin, want for gurnet or grace either here or hereafter. And may—"

He paused suddenly and looked round in wild alarm. A slight reverberation had floated over the water.

"What's the matter, Tom?" demanded Martin, observing the Fool's expression.

"Did you hear anything?" he asked, growing white.

"Yes; some sound coming up from the south'ard."

"A gun?" he enquired piteously.

"Yes, it might be a gun. Some one shooting gulls on the downs."

"No, no; not the downs. The Bishop's. The dummy bought a gun last night, but I

didn't know he had either powder or shot; and he told me when he asked me to go with him that he hadn't any; and—and—and—"

"And what?" cried several. They were all now standing around Tom, listening eagerly.

"And if that she-wolf didn't give it to him, who did? and if she didn't put thoughts into his head, she that has a spite against him and his, because they're my friends, no one else did."

"Well, but there's no harm in his firing his gun?"

"But the she-wolf has been busy with him already, and there's bad blood between father and son. Will some one come with me? I couldn't look at it if there was any harm, because only for me he'd have no gun."

His listeners had now been thoroughly roused, and, leading a small band of volunteers, Tom set out for the Bishop's at a run.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM KILLARD TO THE BISHOP'S.

ABREAST with the Fool strode Edward Martin. The lank, bony young man of 1843 had developed into a broad-shouldered muscular giant in 1854. He measured over six feet, but his great breadth of shoulders and depth of chest made him look no more than the average height. He was reputed to be the strongest man in the parish.

A Clare currach is a boat of almost the lightest construction, but it will carry twenty

people. In build it is clumsy and shapeless-looking. It has neither keel nor keelson. Like a Dutch galliot, its stem and stern are round; like the craft they call a prong or prom in the south and west of Ireland, its bow and stem rise out of the water, and when under way it skims over the waves rather than cuts through them. On the Shannon and other rivers the prong is chiefly used for shooting rapids. It has a flat bottom and flat bow, and by this bow being raised out of the water there is less danger of the craft swamping when it rushes headlong into the white foam.

The long heavy swells of the Atlantic on this coast are so many rapids to be climbed and shot, and the light tarred canvas currach, with its round blunt bows and its unresisting keelless bottom, enabling it to be spun swiftly this way or that to meet the

eddying sweep, is found to be the safest and most serviceable model. Two men can carry it with ease, but not more than one man in all Killard could by himself lift it and carry it, arms up, and this one man was Edward Martin. All the villagers had seen him do it.

Two years before this morning a bet was made. A number of fishermen subscribed twenty shillings, and laid the money against him. He, the best of fishermen in Killard, put down his pound, raised the currach in his huge arms, and carried it aloft five hundred yards, amid the cheers of all, of even those who had lost.

When he lowered the currach, he sat down on it to rest and wipe his flushed, steaming face. Pat Casey, who had arranged the bets and held the money, came to

him, and stretching out his hand, said cordially:—

"Well done, Edward Martin! You won fairly, and deserve the money. Take it, for no other man in this parish, or the next one to it, could do the like of that."

Martin did not reach out his hand, but continued to wipe his face and neck.

"Take your money, man!" cried Casey, in a tone of expostulation. Casey knew Martin did not like the idea of the bet.

Martin turned to his wife, who stood beside him. She was weeping for joy at the triumph of her husband.

"You would not think," she was saying to her heart, "that he had the strength to raise an oar when he takes our little Mary in his arms; and look at what he has done to-day! But strong as his arms are, his love is stronger, and his goodness as strong

as ever was goodness in man. My husband!"

At the crowing thought that he was hers she gave a sob of gratitude, and sitting down beside him, put her arm on his great shoulder, just as he turned to speak to her.

"Mary," he said, "take the money, you. Take the money from Pat Casey, and I'll tell you what to do with it by-and-by."

When they were walking together, he said:—

"If I could afford to lose that pound I betted, I can afford to give it away. The men who betted against me have not as much as I, and they cannot as well afford ten shillings as I can my pound. Tell no one, but go to Father Murtagh, and let him know all, and give him the money Pat Casey gave you, and ask him to keep it

until (and may it be a long time off!) some poor fellows are lost, and their wives and children are in want; then ask him to do the best with the money for the poor widows and orphans."

The next Sunday Father Murtagh preached on charity, and said, without mentioning names, that one man present understood what charity was, for he wished better to succour the afflicted than to blazon his name, and he desired to serve his fellows on earth, and keep himself out of their gratitude on earth, which was the proper way to secure their gratitude and the approval of God when all meet in Heaven.

By some subtle instinct the people suspected who the charitable man was, and looked at him. His wife could not refrain from tears, and this confirmed the sus-

picions. From that out the presence of Edward Martin always calmed and soothed, and elevated the villagers like a prayer.

On the August morning Tom the Fool and his little group of volunteers set out for the Bishop's Island, the face of Edward Martin, usually grave, wore a sombre look.

"I hope there's nothing wrong at the Island!" he said to Tom.

The other men followed at a short distance. Martin held a little aloof from the villagers. They looked on him as a superior, and therefore the men now kept behind, allowing him and Lane's great friend to lead.

"I hope not, Edward Martin; I hope not. But I have my doubts some time. Lane is a madman when put out. He's not a fool like me, but mad like a storm,

without any sense or reason in his legs or arms, or head."

"I hope nothing has happened; for, Tom, now I'll tell you what you must speak of to no one."

"Not to a soul?"

"No, not to a soul."

"Not even my friends on the Bishop's?"

"Not them; not them most of all, for it's about the boy, and it would put the father in a rage if he knew."

"Anything against the boy? any harm that is coming to him? That's if the worst harm hasn't—" he paused, did not finish the sentence, but muttered "Ugh!"

"No, nothing that will bring or has brought harm to anyone."

"Tell me."

"I'm the boy's godfather."

"Godfather, Edward Martin! What do

you mean? Do you take me for a fool? He never was out of his father's sight ashore, and no one was ever on the Island but myself. Who christened him?"

"Father Murtagh, in Casey's stable. You may take my word for that. Well, I often thought, Tom, that I ought to try and do something for him. You know I promised then, and when I make a promise I mean what I say—"

"You're a good man, Edward Martin, and you gave me a gurnet this morning, and here it is."

"Well, I often thought," continued Martin, "that if anything happened David Lane I'd take care of the boy, and get him taught, as far as one of that family can be taught, what I promised for him ten years ago."

"You're a good man, Edward Martin;

but is that all! Between them and all harm, including the she-wolf—bless the hearers! but if any harm came to Lane, the boy would die. Would you do anything but teach him?"

"Yes, I'd do more. I'd take him, and do for him."

"You would! you would!" cried the Fool, bounding and capering around the fisherman. "Horah! Horah! My friends have another friend at last. Horah! And that," snapping his fingers, "for the old she-wolf now. With Tom the Fool and Edward Martin, I'll laugh at all she can do against me or my friends."

They had by this time got more than half-way. The downs stretched away quite flat, with no wall or shrub of any kind to obstruct the view. Martin was by far the tallest of the men. When Tom became

quiet once more, a man in the rear called out, "Mr. Martin, you're the tallest; I think I see something on the mainland, near the Bishop's! Do you?"

They all stopped. Martin shaded his eyes, and looked with that calm deliberation peculiar to seamen. At length he spoke:—

"Yes, I see a figure lying on the downs."

"Which?" screamed the Fool.

"The boy. Let us run."

And they dashed off at the top of their speed.

CHAPTER X.

A TRAITOR DISCOVERED.

When, on that August morning, Lane's son left his sleeping chamber in the hut, he found his father busily engaged preparing breakfast. The spirits of the boy seemed utterly crushed; the father was dull and gloomy, with a lowering danger in his eyes, but his actions were as kind as usual. He helped his son liberally to food, and pressed him to eat more, when the boy appeared satisfied. But he did not kiss him, or fondle him, as was his custom.

The boy's eyes were full of tears, and he could hardly swallow the potatoes and fish. He rarely looked at his father, and when their glances chanced to meet, the latter dropped his and frowned.

As soon as breakfast was finished, the father cleared the table. Then, turning to the boy, he made signs to him, and the son taking a basket, went out, crossed the Island, and descended slowly and heedlessly the precipitous path leading to the ledge. Here he drew in the hand-lines, removed the fish, and rebaited the hooks. Having gathered the fish into the basket, he sat down and fixed his eyes wearily on the sea.

Meanwhile, the father had taken the gun out of its hiding place under the bed, examined it carefully at the nipple, and placed it against the inner edge of the door

jamb. When this was done, he stood outside the door, so as to command a view of the head of the path leading to the ledge, folded his arms, set his teeth, knit his brow, and waited.

The sky was serene and blue, not a cloud broke the infinite expanse. The light was cool and gracious; the air fresh and invigorating. The sea fowl had by this time passed out far from shore, and their shrill dreary notes no longer floated above the dull low murmur of the swells two hundred and fifty feet below.

The boy was long—much longer than usual, but David Lane never moved a muscle. His attitude and his features remained as fixed as though a withering vapour from the pole had frozen him as he stood. The expression of his countenance was that of one awaiting fate, rather than

one expecting a foe; but it was tragic. Tragic with a dire resolution, and far down under the resolution, a wild appalling grief. It was not the face of a man who thought. There was no trace of succession of ideas, but it seemed as though his mind, like his body, was frozen into one unalterable attitude; as though one picture were burned against that path, and nothing could displace it.

At length, above the level of the Island, appeared the boy's head.

No muscle of the father moved. He remained rigid.

The shoulders and bust of the boy rose into view; then the arms and basket he carried.

Still David Lane never stirred.

The figure of the child emerged com-

pletely, and he took one pace in the direction of the hut.

Instantly, as though the vitality of a thousand men had been flung upon him, the father sprang into the hut, seized the gun, lifted it to his shoulder, and aiming at the chimney place, fired.

The explosion was terrific, for the charge was large and the chamber small, and, in the calm of the morning, it seemed as though the Bishop's Island had been riven from summit to base.

Upon the instant he fired, quick as the flash itself, the man spun round on his heel and looked at the door. No smoke had reached it. The smoke lay huddled in blue waves near the fire-place.

Then Lane folded his arms swiftly across his breast, knit his brows, and, setting his

teeth, stood inside the door confronting fate, as he had awaited it without.

In a second, the boy bounded into the open, pale and awe-stricken. His eyes were wild with terror. He had lost his hat and his basket, and his hair waved hither and thither as if blown by a wind. When he saw his father standing safe before him, the expression changed electrically, and with a low moan of relief, he stretched forth his arms and sank to the ground.

The father sprang back, as though the nether realms gaped at his feet, and with a wild shrill yell of despair, threw his hands towards Heaven, and with his upturned eyes and out-stretched arms, seemed to clamour for annihilation. While the father remained thus, the boy lay motionless on the ground. His arms were doubled under

him, and his knees drawn up; his face deadly pale, his lips blue, his eyes open but rayless.

In a few moments the father's arms dropped; the expression of his face altered, and his eyes fell upon the prostrate form in the doorway. Stepping hastily forward, he sprang over the child, and, having reached the open air, strode several times up and down the island, through the white warm sunshine and fragrant dewy air. Then he returned to the doorway and looked in.

The position of the figure had not changed in the least. Again David Lane turned away, and dashed hither and thither blindly. Once more he paused at the doorway. The boy had not moved. A sudden fear seemed to seize upon the father. He leaped into the hut, stooped near the fireplace, and

examined the wall. Presently, with his fingers, he picked something out from between two of the stones. Holding this to the light, he examined it carefully. Yes, it was the chief portion of the leaden bullet. It broke in two as he turned it in his hand, and showed in the interior an old seam. That was the cut through which the hand-line had passed. A look of angry perplexity now passed over his face, and his eyes turned once more to the ground, near the doorway.

Not a muscle had stirred; not a fold of the clothes had been displaced. Frowning heavily, as if he suspected a trick, the father crossed the room, stooped, and catching the child at the waist, lifted him. The head, and arms, and lower limbs hung down limp and nerveless.

A spasm of horror passed over the

features of the father, and he shook the child once, twice, thrice, without effect. Then lifting him higher, he carried him across the little chamber, and placed him on the bed where the boy's mother had died. He put a pillow under his son's head, drew down his limbs, and crossed the long arms over the breast. When this was done, he sat down as far off as he could, and regarded the bed with a rigid expressionless air.

In a little while a light shot into his eyes. He rose, kindled a candle, and held the flame opposite the open lips. He had seen this done in Killard during the cholera years. The yellow flame, pale and sickly in the blaze of the August morning, flicked and waved regularly. The child breathed. He flung the candle down, and resumed his old position.

He had seen death and sleep; these were the only forms of human unconsciousness with which he was familiar. But here was something which was more deep than sleep, less profound than death. What could it be? Was the boy ever to wake? If sleep, which is less powerful than this, lasts a night time, how long will this last? A week or a month?

Death lasts for ever, and sleep for a night; when will this be over, and what is the end to be, deeper or lighter sleep, death or waking?

Whichever it was, doubts that had haunted his mind for a long time were now made certainties. He had seen sea-fowl, which had been invisible, rise and fly away in terror at the firing of a gun, yet, unless he were quite close, and could feel the con-

cussion, he could not tell a gun had been fired.

Tom the Fool had told him it was possible to know, at a great distance, that a gun had been fired, and that the knowledge came, not through the eyes or sense of touch, but through the ears. Nothing came to him through the ears. They were like fingers, they possessed feeling; nothing more.

Tom had told him the firing of a gun could be known through the ears farther off than anything else.

Accordingly, to make sure above all doubt, he had bought the gun. He had fired that gun, and his son knew he had fired that gun, although he could not know it by the sense of touch, or by the sight of smoke, for he had fired so that the boy could

see no smoke. Therefore the boy got messages through his ears.

But his father had married a wife who got no messages through the ears; he had married a wife like himself in this respect; here was his boy now unlike him. His father had told him the gold could not be kept by any one who could send or receive news by the ears, hence he had married a wife like him, David, and he himself one like himself.

The women never knew of the gold, and could not tell any one; his father had told him, and made him promise to marry a wife such as she that had died of the cholera, and to communicate the secret only to a son, and to a son who could neither know nor make known through the ears. Everyone else was to be kept in darkness; for if once the secret of the gold came to be known, it would be useless to them, and they would all

perhaps be slain, for his own father did not know the penalty.

Now here was the traitor, come in the person of his own boy. The boy he loved with all his heart and soul. Here was a traitor in his own house; one who, as soon as he knew of the secret, would send it abroad, and betray his own father unto death.

Yes, this son for whom he would freely have died, could not, on account of his accursed ears, help betraying his father. He would do it as a matter of certainty, as soon as he knew. Here, lying before him, was the only being on earth he cared for, and this being would hurl his own father to destruction on the very first opportunity. This boy would turn his own father off the Bishop's, tear up the Island, and give his father to the police, not because of any

want of affection, but because he was cursed with ears that felt and could send messages to other ears!

Monster! Hideous, unnatural child! Mysterious curse! Away! Away! Away! There is infinite malignity of terror in your presence!

The boy's eyelids trembled. With a weary sigh he sat up and yawned, and smiled at his father. His eyes looked a little dull. He had forgotten what had passed.

When David Lane saw the boy return to consciousness and smile upon him, the look of angry dread gave place to one of frantic yearning. It seemed as though he strove with his eyes to draw his child back into his own nature. His heart hungered to absorb him; but he made no sign. His arms lay clasped upon his knees; his head was thrust forward, his figure motionless;

but the agony of love betrayed was in his eyes.

There was no indignation now against his child. The worst possible certainty had been reached. If by any perversity of nature intelligible to himself he feared betrayal at the hands of his son, there might have been a struggle between indignation and love, and, for a time at least, love might have triumphed. But it was not his boy opposed him, but fate, in a form he could not understand. The son, by no fault of his own, but by the power of some curse, had been endowed by fate with an ability which he could not fail to exert for his father's destruction.

This boy, his own child, the idol of his life, his own flesh and blood, was the vessel of some spirit of wrath with power to work his destruction through mysterious and

infallible agencies against which neither he nor the boy could strive with hope of success. His son was the flesh of his flesh, but the spirit of his ruin!

By this time the boy had realised all, and covered his face, and was weeping.

David Lane caught him by the shoulder and led him forth, flung the loop over the hook, and prepared the meshes for crossing the chasm. When this was done he made signs to the boy.

The latter turned pale with terror. The father repeated the signs calmly, without a trace of passion.

The boy appealed to him with outstretched hands.

Lane pointed to the mainland, and made a swift, decided gesture.

The child flung himself down moaning, and seized his father's knees and clasped

them, and rested his pale tear-stained cheek against them in piteous supplication.

The deaf mute never moved. His resolution was taken inexorably. Nothing could shake him. He raised his son gently, set him on his feet, and turning his back on him went towards the hut. In a few minutes he came back; the boy was gone.

Raising the rope he shook it free of the hook, and the Island was cast off into isolation, and he into the rayless solitude of a life without a single love, a single hope, a single ambition, a single fear, save the one guilty one, not his own, but which seemed part of himself, born with his nature and laid upon him anew when first his father communicated the secret to him, and named the precautions and possible penalties in case of discovery.

When the rope once more hung idly

down the dim deep cleft, Lane went into his own sleeping room. Something bright lying on the floor attracted his attention. He stooped and looked. It was his boy's clasp-knife. A sudden fury of sorrow seized him and shook him. His breath came short, his chest heaved, he bellowed aloud like a stricken beast. His blood-shot eyes ran fiercely round the place seeking something. Suddenly they stopped, riveted by the sight of the gun lying in a corner. He clutched it by the barrel as though he would drive the sides together, and with a hoarse yell dashed into the sunlight, sprang to the brink of the cliff facing the ocean, and swinging the weapon swiftly twice over his head, let it go, sending it far out into the sunlit air. With a sudden plunge it shot downward and disappeared for ever.

He looked awhile as if to give it time to

reach the water, then clutching his head in both his hands, tottered to his own chamber and threw himself heavily on the earthen floor, his arms and legs spread wide and his powerful hands digging into the hard ground until they were covered with blood.

CHAPTER XI.

A NEW FATHER.

THE little band of fishermen, led by Tom the Fool and Edward Martin, reached the prostrate form on the cliff. Edward Martin raised it, resting the child's head against his knee. Tom stooped over little Lane with a scared expression on his fat, shapeless face.

"He's not dead, Edward Martin?" demanded Tom in quavering accents.

"No, not dead; I feel his heart beating. Is there any blood on the clothes?"

While Martin was undoing the boy's col-

lar and rubbing his hands, the men examined the child carefully.

"We can't see any blood," replied Maurice Heffernan, son of Kitty Heffernan, a slender, tall, dark-haired, ragged, unshorn man of forty; "and, as far as I can make out, there are no bones broken."

The part of the downs on which they had found the boy was about a quarter of a mile from the Bishop's.

"Rub him well. Has any one whiskey?"

"Here!" cried Nat Barron, holding up a bottle in his blistered hand.

Many of the boats carried small bottles of whiskey when they fished by night, to counteract the injurious morning chills. Whiskey was scarce in the village, as there was no public-house. It had to be brought from Clonmore. It was seldom abused in Killard, and was regarded as medicine. But some-

times, when the men went to Clonmore, they indulged freely.

Martin poured some out of the bottle down the throat of the boy, and then watched him carefully.

"He's coming to," whispered Heffernan, and, as he spoke, a shiver passed through the boy's limbs, and he looked up into Martin's face. Instantly he closed his eyes.

The Fool uttered a cry of joy, and throwing himself on his knees, wrapped his arms round him.

For this child the world had hitherto been that lonely Island; the universe, the sun and moon and stars as they passed over his head; mankind, his father and the Fool, with—in the dim chambers of his early memory—the shadow of his mother. He had no knowledge, no idea of anything beyond. Sometimes he had seen men in boats beneath the cliffs;

now and then people had passed by the Bishop's, and stood a while to look at him. But those in the boats and those on the cliffs were, like his mother, insubstantial phantoms crossing before his eyes to depart for ever.

He had a clear memory of Tom and his father carrying his mother away while he was desired to remain in the hut. His mother had never returned, and he was told she never should. The people went by and never returned, and he settled it in his mind that they never should. They were even less substantial than his mother, for he could recall touching her, and she had been tangible and warm like himself. But those passing by were mere spectres without material existence, utterly irrelevant to him.

Now, who were those that bent over him?

Other fathers? for they were not like his mother. Were there really other people, material and warm to the touch like his father? Would those people spurn him and send him away from them?

What strange noises they were making, like and unlike the gulls and the curlews! Tom sometimes made such noises when sitting before the fire in the hut.

"Edward Martin," said Tom, after a pause, during which the breathing of the boy became more strong and his eyes remained closed; "are you going to stay here all day, or is anyone going to the Bishop's to see what is wrong there?"

"Do you go on to the Island and see. Let whoever likes go with you, the child is all right."

"But what will you do with my friend Lane's boy?"

"Could he come ashore without his father's knowledge?"

"No; the boy could not make the bridge. It takes a strong arm like Lane's to do that. You have a strong arm, Edward Martin, but you couldn't do it, for it wants a sure aim as well. You won't leave the boy here for that old she-wolf?"

"Very good; I'll take the boy home to my place, and get Mary to look after him. You and the men go and bring what news you can."

Raising the child as lightly as though he were an infant, Edward Martin turned and strode off in the direction of Killard. The other men following Tom, continued their way towards the Island.

The boy had closed his eyes in perplexity, not fear. He was unable to understand his new position. To be thus cared for and car-

ried by some one he had never seen before, filled his uninformed mind with wonderment.

Was this a second father, with whom his future days were to be spent? His father of the Island had banished him for ever. He was never to return. The sun was to rise and set, rise over the downs and set over the ocean, but never more was he to be on the Island.

Had this strange man an island and a hut and hand-lines, and would he make awful noises in the hut, and then send him forth again.

Then he began to wonder and regret.

Why had he not clung to Tom? Tom would let no one strike him. Tom brought him sweet things now and then. Why had he not appealed to Tom? The Fool had gone away. At night how should it be?

His thoughts now took another turn.

But this man who carried him was as kind as Tom or his father, only he did not press him in his arms or kiss him. Maybe this man, after all, was to be a second father. His first father had told him he could never return. He did not remember going to the Island first. Perhaps to-morrow, when he awoke, he should find himself on another island with this man for a father; and, perhaps, he should never be able to recall how he came to that second island.

Edward Martin stopped a moment, shifted his burden, and with his hand drew the hair off the child's face as he resumed his way.

The boy opened his eyes and looked up.

Martin smiled, and patted the child's cheek with his hand.

The little fellow smiled back, and, putting his arm round the pillar-like neck of his bearer, pressed him to him.

Martin stooped and kissed the boy's forehead, and then strode on with a lighter heart.

This then was the new father. He had kissed him as the old one used long ago. Should he forget all when he awoke on this man's island to-morrow? That was now the only question.

When the fisherman reached his home he walked straight in. Mrs. Martin was busily engaged getting breakfast. She had just come back, after seeing the fish safely brought to Pat Casey's. She turned as he entered, and asked quickly:—

"Well, Edward, what was the matter; anything wrong?"

"We don't know yet. We found the boy in a faint on the downs. I carried him over; here he is," setting him down.

The woman recoiled slightly and grew a little pale.

"David Lane's boy!" she cried, in a tone out of which she strove to keep her shrinking dislike. "Is he hurt?" she added, keeping her eyes fixed on the uncouth child, as he stood dazed by all he saw.

"I don't think he is."

"But—but what are you going to do with him? Wouldn't Casey's be the best place for him until the men come back? You may get into trouble over the child."

In spite of herself, her dislike was now manifest.

"This is the best place for him. No harm can come to anyone for befriending an outcast that is without blame. I'm his godfather, and no one in the village has so good a right to do a turn for him." The man was impressive and stern. He knew the

doubts and fears which were filling his wife's mind.

"But, Edward, don't you think—don't you believe there's something in what every one says about the Lanes?" she asked in a pleading voice.

"I don't know what everybody says," he replied with determination and a slight knitting of the brows.

"I mean—I mean what they say in the village. You know there's something amiss with the Lanes." Her voice trembled slightly. It was not often that Mrs. Martin expostulated with her husband, and now her manner was obviously one of expostulation.

"What they say in the village breaks no bones and does no harm, except to those themselves who speak ill of their neighbours. The boy is to stop here until the

men come back with news; then we'll see what is to be done with him. Take the boy and wash him; he wants it badly, poor little fellow. After that we'll have breakfast. I am worn out by the night and this morning."

"Wash him!" she cried, starting farther back. "Wash him! Oh! Edward, how could you tell me to do such a thing? Think of our own child."

The man frowned heavily. He was slow to lose his temper. His wife had never seen him in a rage in all her life, but something told her his anger would be terrible. He now looked as though the limit of his self-restraint had been almost reached. He struck the table a violent blow with his clenched hand, and fixed his dark eyes upon her.

"I *am* thinking of our child. I am thinking of how I should feel if because of

any foolish stories about you or me people treated our child worse than if she was a wild beast. Take the boy and remember you are a mother, and that if God sent us our child he could take her from us. Woman! you will make me angry if you stand there longer. Take the boy and treat him as if he were one of God's people, not a serpent."

There was a lofty magnanimity in the man's indignation, and the woman was cowed and humbled. Catching Lane's son by the hand, she led him into her own room.

When Tom and the fishermen came back, they found Martin, his wife, and little Lane at breakfast. The Fool had not been on the Island, but he had attracted Lane's attention, and exchanged signals with him from the mainland.

To Tom's questions the dumb man's answer had been that he had cast off his son for ever, and come what might the boy was never more to set foot on the Bishop's Island. Further he would tell nothing.

When Martin heard Tom's story, he beckoned to the boy, who came; and the man placing his large red sinewy hand on the child's dark hair, said:—

"Neighbours, going on eleven years ago, I, a stranger, came across the cliffs one night and knocked at the first house I saw a light in. I was made welcome, and those who made me welcome have never said or showed they were sorry for their goodness to me. This was the house I knocked at, and my wife was then a young girl. This boy has been cast off by his father, and he is even more helpless than I was then, for his youth is in his way. I am the boy's godfather.

I stood godfather to him the day he was born, and Father Murtagh called him John, after the favourite disciple. I will not let this house be less to him than it has been to me. I'll take the boy and do for him. From this out John Lane shall be as though he were my son. Sit you down, men, you are worn out. Sit down and have some breakfast with us."

He placed the boy on his knee, and offered him food. Suddenly, as the man raised a mug of milk to the child's lips, a thought struck the latter. He glided from his perch, and thrusting his hand into his pocket, discovered his clasp-knife was gone. He no longer felt any doubt. This was his new father. To-morrow morning he should awake on this new father's island, and forgetful of all the past, bait his hooks and gaze at the sea, and weave patterns on the

darkness with glowing faggots. In time he should get a clasp-knife exactly such as he had lost, and when many seasons had passed, he should come to love this new father and this new mother too, as he had loved the old; but for to-day he should think only of the old father, and how bitter it was to be sent away.

When all this flowed upon the child's mind, he covered his face and wept.

CHAPTER XII.

HIEROGLYPHICS.

THE noon of that day was very warm, not a cloud floated between earth and heaven. The faint blue sky spread like a vast silver mist over the dreary road from Clonmore to Killard. The road was dry and sandy, few trees grew in the shallow soil, and sheep found scanty food in the short brittle grass. Low stone fences divided vast expanses of dull green pasturage, and as far as the eye could reach, no hill broke the bald monotony of the landscape.

Mr. James Heywood and Christopher Cahill, on different sides of an outside car, had passed the tenth milestone, and were drawing near the village. They had been silent for a long time, at last Cahill spoke :—

"It's very hot, Mr. Heywood, but a day like this does one good." He was trying to extract some consoling reflection from the midst of his sufferings.

"Yes, a warm day does one good, the heat opens the pores, and thus the oxygenation of the blood is facilitated."

"Is that it?" asked Cahill, who seemed to think that opening the pores might be very agreeable to those who knew all about them and the blood; but that for ignorant men it was best to have them closed, in a cooler atmosphere.

"And," continued the philosopher,

"when the blood is oxygenated, the spirits improve, and the fancy is quickened."

"Ah!" breathed the young man, turning anxious eyes in the direction of the village, "I wish we were there."

"Nature is the wisest of mistresses; she sends the heat in summer, when the air is dry. If we had this heat in winter we should all suffer horribly."

"I'd leave the country, for one. But that can never happen?"

"I'm not sure of that. You see, it all depends on the sun and axes. So long as things remain as they are we are safe. But of late they are discovering, with those new powerful telescopes, such a number of new planets that the orbit of the earth may ultimately be blocked up, and we may be driven to travel by another way and at another angle."

"Then why don't the Government forbid them finding out more planets. It seems to me like daring Providence, to be always striving to get at the works by spying into the heavens by night."

"Government could do nothing, and discovery must go on until the end."

"But with this steam they ought to be able to do anything. I'm told this steam is a wonderful thing. I never saw any of it, but I heard accounts of it."

"Steam is a most wonderful thing, but quite powerless in this case. You, no doubt, believe the application of steam to be a modern invention. Nothing of the kind! It was well known to the ancient Egyptians."

"Ah, how?"

"Yes, they were the most enlightened race at one time, and knew many things

long since lost; for instance, the hieroglyphics are believed to have been familiar to them."

"And what happened the hieroglyphics? I dare say some one or other will get hold of them some day, if we only live to see it, which I hope we may." Mr. Cahill was straining a point to keep the philosopher in good humour.

"They have got a key to them."

"And may be they're the Gipsies, between them and all hurts and harms."

"Oh dear, no! you are confounding the hieroglyphics with the lost tribes. That is a dangerous error, against which you cannot be too guarded. The hieroglyphics were a form of secret writing—writing by pictures. When a man wanted to write down the idea sun he made a circle."

"And when he wanted to write down

the idea of a roasting sun like this, what did he do, Mr. Heywood?"

"There were, I think, no participles, either active or passive, so far as I have ever been able to ascertain, in Egyptian, for they did not speak hieroglyphics. Now this man in whom you take such a great interest, this Streets—"

"Lane, David Lane."

"This David Lane may be said to speak hieroglyphics."

"But you don't mean to say he's one of the lost tribes?"

"I should not care to bind myself to any theory respecting him until I see him."

"The reference to the man of the Bishop's roused the flagging interest of Cahill; besides, they were at last getting near Killard. Cahill shook himself, wiped his forehead, and stood up to try if through

the opening cleft of ground he could get one look at the blue cool sea. Just as he did so the horse shied violently and plunged forward, and before young Cahill could recover his hold or seat, he was thrown flat on his back in the middle of the road.

He was quickly on his feet again; he did not feel hurt but he did feel very angry.

"Bother the brute! What did he shy at?" he cried, as he tried to shake the dust off as a dog dries his coat after a swim.

"'Twas no fault of his or mine, sir, but that white paper there, just under you."

"Hanging is too good for any blackguard that leaves paper about the roads." He stooped, raised a small fold of paper which lay on the ground. He was in the act of tearing it furiously in two, when something on it attracted his attention, and

he stopped. He opened and looked more closely at the paper, and then exclaimed, "Well, Mr. Heywood, if this isn't a really queer thing! Here's a kind of likeness of the Island," he turned the paper on one side, "and a lot of something I can't make out on the other; maybe they're those things you were telling me of—look!"

Mr. Heywood took the paper, and fixing his spectacles, coughed slightly as though to salute his old friends the hieroglyphics.

It required an eye almost morbidly sensitive to the features of the coast to detect any resemblance to the Bishop's in the rude sketch. There was a kind of ragged wall with an indentation, and in the indentation a perpendicular isolated mass. Beneath the wall were a few parallel serpentine lines. On the top of the isolated mass was a square space, and from the bottom of this a

line reaching a short way down the mass, and ending in a black spot.

"That's the Island," explained Cahill, pointing to the isolated mass, "and that's the house," pointing to the square at the top. "I can make it all out but this; the line from the house to the spot. Maybe it's intended for the chimney, and whoever did it forgot the way that smoke mostly goes, and made it travel down, not up."

"As to smoke, it's not necessary that it should ascend; and, indeed, it is more natural that it should descend. But in this, as in many other things, man seems always struggling to overcome the tendencies of nature. Now, if smoke were only passed in pipes through a solution of salt and snow, it would become so dense and hard that it might be shovelled about like soot, of which it is largely composed."

"But, sir, look at the other side. It's that bothers me entirely. Can you make anything of it?"

"It somewhat, in its lower part, resembles an alembic."

"Does it now?" uttered as a tribute to the seer. "And what may an alembic be, sir?"

"An astrological and chemical vessel used in distillation."

"Is it a still you mean?" with astonishment.

"No, an alembic is not what distillers use. It is employed in laboratories."

"And would be no way serviceable in the squeezing of a little drop of potheen?" Cahill seemed losing hold of a fascinating discovery.

"I think not. Besides, these fish are plainly intended to represent a current, and

they indicate a downward current, one, I may observe, unknown in distillation; for it is usual with all volatilized liquids to rise."

"Well, no one ever said he did make potheen. I thought, myself, at one time, maybe that was the secret, but he'd have to do something with the dew, and do that he couldn't without my knowing of it. I can't make anything of it. Could it be one of those things you were speaking of a moment ago, Mr. Heywood?"

"A hieroglyph? It may be; but I have never seen the same character before. Never."

"And can't make out what's meant by it?"

"Not finally; but I do think it indicates distillation of some kind, now that I look more closely; but not of whiskey. It's somewhat like a sign in alchemy."

"And what's that?"

"Alchemy was a superstitious science of the dark ages whereby men thought to turn the baser metals into gold, and to discover the elixir of life."

"Is it to turn iron into gold?" With profound interest the young man now regarded his companion as he put this question.

"Yes; iron, and copper, and lead, and mercury, and silver were used from time to time. But, of course, it was all nonsense—an ignoble superstition, nothing more. At the time it was practised people believed it was possible to achieve success by the aid of the Evil One."

"By the help of Darkness!" Cahill's wonder amounted almost to dismay.

"Yes. But of course that was all nonsense; the thing was never done at all."

"Well, let us be getting on out of this blistering heat, and not waste any more time over the thing." Young Cahill remounted at his side, and the car set off once more. "I'll keep the paper, anyway," he thought. "It's no load to carry."

"How easy 'tis to say," he mused, as they drove along, "that there's no sense in what people tell about Lane and Darkness. Everyone says Lane has more money than can be accounted for. Where does it come from? Where did his father get the thirty pounds he paid for the Island? Where did this man get the ten golden guineas he paid last night for that gun. Guineas! There are no guineas now, and I heard Luke Dillon say 'guineas' as plain as I hear that lark singing now. 'Guineas,' he said. 'Ten golden guineas,' while I was listening,

after they went down the street toward Killard."

With such speculations young Cahill occupied his mind until the car drew up at the door of Pat Casey's shop.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAHILL FINDS AN EMISSARY TO THE ISLAND.

THE rude drawing which had so puzzled the two men was exceedingly simple in character, although it was impossible to determine precisely what it was intended to represent. The lower portion of it resembled a water jug, the upper, the letter U inverted thus, ∩. The loop of the ∩ rested on what may be called the neck of the jug, but not quite evenly, as it touched the bend nearer to the left hand than the right bend of the letter. Notwithstanding this, the

bases of the ∩ hung parallel. The sketch, a mere outline, displayed in the left hand framework of the upper portion a small object, evidently intended to stand for a fish swimming up the down stroke of the ∩. At the junction between the shaft of the thing like a water-bottle and the letter another fish bent in the framework of the letter, and half way down the neck of the bottle appeared a third fish, also facing down. On the highest part of the inverted letter, that is on the outside of the curve, stood two short lines. Between these two straight lines the line of the curve was discontinued. The bases of the ∩ were open, and the top of these straight lines indicated another opening. Thus, if the design represented an alembic there were three outlets from the body of the vessel. The fish, no doubt, showed the course of something, but against

the likelihood of this something being a gas there stood the fact of two free ends, and against the chance of its being a liquid there was the fact that the end of ascent was open like the others.

Once the mackerel had been despatched to Clonmore the people of Killard found little to do. On this August morning the men, after breakfast, lay down to sleep. Gradually the women gathered in knots at open doors and discussed, in low tones, the wonderful news of the expulsion.

"What can have made David Lane send his boy away, he that was so fond of him by all accounts?" asked one woman.

"It's the curse," answered another; "what luck or grace can you expect from such people? It's the curse, my dear; and if right was only done David Lane and all of his would be bundled out of the

parish. It's in Botany Bay they ought to be and not among honest people. All I wonder at is that the fishing keeps any good at all."

"And then," said another in a tone of injury, "to think of Edward Martin taking him in and offering to do for him, is the worst of all."

"Yes," cried a third excitedly, "it wasn't bad enough to have them near us on the Island, but they must come to live among us. I for one will take good care my children have nothing to say to that boy."

"But," suggested Kitty Heffernan, who knew the world and had larger views than those around her, "how do you know anything against this boy? We never heard any harm of him. And don't you know that if the man sent the boy away, suppose the man is a bad member, the boy can't be

like him, for then he'd keep him. Who knows but there's a natural Lane at last, and that's the boy."

This speech seemed to carry much weight with the listeners; for, if they were not prepared to adopt Kitty's view they could find no satisfactory objection to it. Seeing she had made an impression she improved it:—

"You all know now what I knew long ago, that the child is a Christian. So there's one good thing was done for him that wasn't done for his father, and 'twas Edward Martin's doings, for he went to Father Murtagh and told him what was going to happen, and Father Murtagh came. We musn't say the boy is black until he shows his horns."

"Take my word for it," said the ring-leader of the discontent, "you'll see them

soon enough. Mushrooms are slow to grow compared to them."

"I'll believe well of the boy until I see them, then," said his champion warmly.

"Did any one see him? anyone but the men?"

"No. None of us."

"Here's Ellen O'Dwyer coming from the downs. Maybe she saw him."

When the woman reached the group she was hotly assailed with questions. As soon as there was silence, she said:—

"Yes; I saw him. He's more like his mother than his father, with great big eyes and bright brown hair, and a sorrowful look for a child. But do you know what they're after finding out?"

"What?" cried several voices.

"He has his hearing, and can call like a sea-gull, and whistle like the wind in a door,

and even make an offer at a skylark's song. There's for you!"

"What did I say?" shouted Kitty Heffernan triumphantly. "He's christened, and he can hear. Maybe now you'll have a long wait for the horns, Mrs. Gorman."

A derisive look and gesture followed these words, and there is no knowing where the discussion might have ended, but for the arrival at that moment of the outside car carrying the two travellers from Clonmore.

Christopher Cahill led the way into Pat Casey's, spoke to the proprietor, whom he knew well, and arranged that Mr. Heywood was to have the truckle bed in the back parlour, and he himself was to sleep in the shop. He would stay one night certainly, and perhaps two.

When this was arranged he asked Casey

the news, and was told of the surprising event occupying all the tongues of Killard.

At first Cahill would not believe, later he could not. In disjointed speeches made to himself, he canvassed the occurrence, and could not, after elaborate examination, bring himself to regard the report as matter of fact.

Mr. Heywood and he strolled out, and wandered down to the beach. They crossed the sands, and, finding a sheltered nook, sat down.

For a time the talk kept as general as it was possible for any conversation with Mr. Heywood to be. The young man observed the sea was very blue under the opposite shore, and was informed that sea-water was really not blue at all, but reflected the sky, which wasn't blue either, since there was no

such thing at all as colour; which informamation made Cahill shake his head, and say "he was sorry for that."

Then he said that a great number of fish were caught hereabouts, and that of them the crabs were particularly fine. Upon which he had to be corrected and told that the learned decided against crabs being fish; and he was informed, as additional knowledge, that a cod often lays nine millions of eggs, and whales none; which caused the young man to say "Oh!" in surprise, and look as sad as when told about the water and colour. He remarked that the rock they sat on looked very hard, and was assured that the name of it was something or other. He said, with a faint smile, that it was harder even than the rock itself, and would break it if it fell on the rock.

Mr. Heywood let him into the secret of the two Greek words from which the name of the rock was taken; and, after a long account of Athens and the Greek tongue, told Mr. Cahill, whatever might be his fate, to remain steadfast to the faith of the digamma being nothing but a breathing mark, which the red-faced young man promised to do, with a manner and look of even deeper dejection, as though he regarded anyone holding an opposite theory as nothing better than a subtle and venomous foe, against whose attacks he would do all that lay in his power, but still had not a stout heart for the struggle.

It was not, however, until the philosopher disclosed to him the fact that on every square inch of his body there rested a pressure of fourteen pounds avoirdupois, that the spirits of the young man gave way com-

pletely, and he said bitterly, as if reviling fate for all her deceits and wrongs, and the intolerable burden of air placed on ignorant men:—

"Mr. Heywood, it's enough to frighten a man out of his seven senses! So it is! But, sir, I'm greatly afraid we'll have our journey for nothing."

"I am sure I enjoy the day very much. The sea and rocks recall to my mind many scientific facts with which I have not been dealing latterly."

"It's a pleasure to me, sir," said young Cahill, with melancholy humility, "to think you like the place; and no place could be finer. But with regard to David Lane and the news we heard to-day, I'm afraid we'll have our journey for nothing. It isn't likely, is it, Mr. Heywood, that he'll come ashore soon after what happened?

and as to anyone going to the Island now, that's out of the question."

"There is something in what you say," returned the philosopher. "He has been a solitary man all his life; no doubt he will not care to mingle with other members of the human family peacefully; peacefully, for some time. If people tried to visit him now he might mingle with them only in a spirit of rancour, in a bellicose or warlike spirit, and this spirit in the Celt, and indeed in most of the Caucasian and other races, frequently leads to blows. I need scarcely tell you that a man actively engaged in physical fighting scarcely affords a good subject for philosophical examination, except so far as his strength of body and limb and his agility are concerned, upon none of which points, do you, as far as I have gathered, desire my opinion. Therefore I am led to

believe we shall have no opportunity of examining his idiosyncracies during our way."

All of which plunged the young man into profounder hopelessness. The real cause of his sadness during Mr. Heywood's discourse on colour, the rocks, the digamma, and atmospheric pressure, had been somewhat apart from the subjects. He had been almost wholly occupied with thoughts connected with his business in Killard. At first he had felt it hard that by unlucky chance he should come at so inauspicious a time.

As Mr. Heywood went on, and all semblance of reason appeared to depart from the philosopher, Cahill began to wonder whether in any case there would be much good in confronting the deaf mute and a man who spoke fables about colour and the air,

and talked so unintelligibly about rocks. If a man said that the sea wasn't blue, and that there was no such thing as blue, and this with the blue sea and blue sky before him, could it be likely he'd be able to make anything out of David Lane, who for years and years had defied the scrutiny of the shrewdest?

But wait! Didn't they say "Set a thief to catch a thief?" Well, maybe, a man who spoke words no one could understand, and said things weren't that every one saw were, might be the best at David Lane. But then there did not remain the ghost of a chance of David Lane leaving the Island now, and there was no use in thinking any more about it. His plan had failed for the present.

When the two men got back to the village it was dark. They found supper

set for them in the back parlour, and without much delay or ceremony they sat down and began to eat. When they had finished, Cahill produced his pipe and filled it. He put his hand into his pocket for some paper, and drew out the rough sketch he had found on the road. He was about to tear a piece off; suddenly he changed his mind, lit his pipe at the candle, and flattening the paper out before him, looked gloomily at it through the white tobacco smoke. While thus engaged he heard a voice in the shop, listened, and then said to his companion:—

"Mr. Heywood, there's Tom outside. Would you object to my asking him in?"

"Certainly not."

Cahill left the room, and returned with the Fool. "Sit down, Tom, and have something to eat."

This was an invitation Tom seldom declined; he was in the act of accepting when his eyes met the paper. He made a sudden snatch at it. Cahill angrily anticipated him, and plucked it away.

"Where did you get that? Where did you get that paper? Did the boy rob his father of it?"

"What is it to you where I got it? How dare you try to take it?" demanded Cahill sullenly.

"Because it's my friend David Lane's, and you have no right to it. Give it back to me until I bring it to its rightful owner."

"Maybe I have as good a right to it as David Lane or anyone else."

"You haven't! You haven't! It's his. I saw it with him often, and if you don't give it to me on the spot I'll get some one that'll make you, if I have to go to Clonmore and inform on you."

"Very well, and I'll keep you company; and while you're telling about this paper I'll be telling how some one who has no license, bought a gun last night. Are you ready to be off?"

"Whist, your talk!" cried the Fool in consternation.

"Aren't you coming to Clonmore with me? Sergeant Murphy wouldn't mind getting up to hear two such pleasant stories."

"Whist, I say, and don't be a fool. But the paper is Lane's, and it's no good to you. It's a likeness of his own property, and no use to anyone but the rightful owner; and, Chris Cahill, although they say things against you, you're not the man to keep another man's property, and he a widower and an orphan on a desolate island."

The young man reflected for a moment. "Does Lane think much of the paper?"

"He wouldn't give it up for a shoal of herrings."

"Very well, if it's any use to him he can have it by coming for it here to-morrow at eleven o'clock. This gentleman and I will be waiting for him."

"But——"

"Oh, if that won't do I'll start for Clonmore. The evening is cool, and I know Sergeant Murphy wouldn't mind getting up to have a chat about that gun."

"I believe all the bad that's said against you, Christie Cahill, and worse; and only for what you know I'd do my best against you."

And shaking his fist at the young man he dashed out of the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER THE EXPULSION.

THE calm sea, the bright air, the plenteous sunshine brought no consolation to the heart of David Lane on the day he drove his son from the Island. Since his earliest recollection the pageantries of nature had been familiar to his eyes. He lived among them, but they were independent of him. In his youthful manhood he had taken a wife. He had selected her from all he met by the exercise of reason, not by love or passion. In time she grew into his life; filled out and made perfect what was perfectable in his dark soul.

Then a child—a son—came, and a new feeling arose in his heart. The phenomena of external nature had, he knew, been displayed before he was there to see. His wife had grown from infancy to childhood, from childhood to womanhood before he met her. He had acquired her as any man acquires what has been provided for him outside the range of his own eyes, and never displayed until the hour of want had come to him. Over what went on among the elements he had no control; over his wife, before he had found her, he had no control.

There was a dark and inexplorable past behind her advent. As far as his nature permitted him he had grown to love her. But she had come to him out of an uncertain, indefinite bygone, and when she died it seemed as though she had gone back to the dimness out of which she had approached.

But his son was his son. No uncertainty existed about his boy's past. He had come a tiny infant and grown into childhood under his own eyes. He himself had married in hope of having a son. The son was given to him, and hence he felt a double sense of proprietorship in the boy. When he set out inland eleven years ago to find a wife he had thought nothing of her, all of an heir for the Bishop's.

Ten years ago his hopes were realised. He had an heir; and though he was kind and tender to the woman, all the fierce love of his rugged nature clung to the boy and wound around him as the days went on. Here was this young being, his own flesh and blood, given to him that he might bring him up as he chose, teach him how to fish, how to seem to live by fishing only, and in time impart what his own father had communicated to him.

Now, after all his years of love and hope this boy turned out not to be like himself or his dead wife. Worst of all, his father had warned him that certain evil would follow if such a child were born. If there had been but one fear, that of the secret being revealed, he could have endured betrayal, if only the doing of the treason fell not into the hands of this one being. All the world besides might conspire against him; who chose might come and find out all, yea, fling him headlong from the cliff if they would only leave him the certainty that this boy had been loyal to him. But to see in front of all his enemies the face of his child, and to feel that he had been done to ruin by a curse working in the blood of the single creature he loved, goaded him into a rage of horror and repulsion, in which no tender emotions could prevail.

On that day he paced the Island with a solemn weary step, head sunken on chest, arms clasped behind, as though the weight of a world's sorrows were upon him. Then suddenly his manner would alter; he threw up his head, looked round defiantly as though weariness of his intolerable sufferings made him desire a circle of foes. Anon he shaded his eyes and scanned the downs narrowly from the highest point of the Island, seeming to watch for the messengers of fate. But soon his face would change to a bitter smile—the boy knew nothing the telling of which could harm. That was well!

In the afternoon he descended to the low ledge fronting the ocean and, with his face to the scorching sun, sat until the great red disk had sunk through the cloudless air into the realm of shades below the broad sad margin of the sea.

Then he arose, and with heavy faltering steps ascended the steep path. Frequently he stumbled and paused to examine the way as though it were new to him. When he reached the summit he shook himself as if he had been sleeping, and sought to disencumber himself of heaviness. He looked at the mainland with vacant, hollow eyes, and was crossing to the hut when his foot struck something. Glancing down he saw the basket lying as it had fallen from the boy's hands. Quickening his pace he gained his own room and shut the door.

All within was unaltered. Nothing had been moved since morning, and in the dim light which entered at the small narrow window the table and chairs and bed lay in a brown gloom.

No food had passed his lips since morning, yet he did not seek any now. He stretched

himself wearily on the bed, and covering his face for a while, remained motionless.

It was dark before he stirred. With a deep worn-out sigh he got up, struck a match, and lit a candle. Putting the candle down on the table, he looked around. His eyes were fixed and staring like a sleep-walker's. There was in all his movements a vagueness which made it seem as though his sight had suffered. When he stirred he knocked up against things lying in his way; when he stretched out his hand to place the candle on the table, he miscalculated the distance, and his hand did not reach until he had made a second attempt. He looked like one losing sight, or receiving it after long deprivation of it.

All at once light, angry light, flashed into his eyes. He stooped swiftly, picked up something and held it in the dull glare of the candle.

The boy's clasp-knife!

For a moment he stood pale and furious. Through his nostrils the hot breath came and went with a loud snore. Suddenly he tore open all the blades and miniature tools, and, with cruel, slow deliberation bent each, one after another, on the table until it snapped and flew out of the haft. Then, holding the empty haft firmly clutched in his fist, he strode up and down, with his head thrown back, his eyes flashing and his cheeks flushed, like a wounded lion at bay.

After a while he grew more calm, and a cold, deadly look of vengeance came into his face. With a quiet, sinister smile he took a faggot from beside the fireplace, opened the door, and carrying the candle in the same hand as the faggot, and the clasp-knife in the other, went out into the dewy darkness and solemn peace of the night.

The flame of the candle bent towards him as he walked, but never flicked; there was not a breath of wind. Behind him his grotesque shadow, distorted by the inequality of the ground, leaped and shortened and lengthened. Below murmured the heavy pulses of the ocean, above the quiet stars gleamed large in the vapourous air. As he passed, a night-bird flew overhead with a desolate cry.

He crossed at the seaward side of the house and went into his son's chamber. He did not seem in any hurry now, for, setting down the light, he surveyed the interior and smiled in the same cruel, deadly way.

There stood a chair at the head of the bedstead, and on this he sat down. Taking up the faggot, he opened it slowly, and when it had become a loose heap he placed

it softly under the bed; unlocking his shut fist, he laid the haft of the clasp-knife slowly and gently on the bed, then paused a while and examined with malignant satisfaction what he had done.

His purpose was now clear. He was going to destroy everything material which could remind him of his son.

He glanced round with a calculating eye. There was no woodwork employed in the construction of the room but the beams in the roof and the door and door-posts. The bed would burn swiftly and with no intense flame. The door was six feet off and the beams more than five. All this seemed to please him greatly, so greatly that some of the malignity died out of his face, and he appeared consoled by finding matters so favourable to his plan.

He drew out his pleasure by carefully

removing everything else in the room to the greatest distance from the bed.

When all was ready he took up the candle. Some instinct seemed to tell him he looked pleased, for he smiled all round the dim cell as though surrounded by spectators. He could, and he would, eradicate for ever all memory of that thing, his son. He would, and he could. There was nothing easier. See, he had set all ready. There were the faggot, and the bed, and the clasp-knife all in a heap; he pointed to them as though expounding the situation. There were the chairs and stool (pointing), they could be burned in his own fire-grate when broken up. The table; that, too, would make excellent fuel, and nothing more remained. Nothing more.

He looked around to make sure.

The glass! The little piece of looking-glass against the wall.

He approached it, holding the candle high. He caught it slowly, and raised it by the bottom to take it off the nail on which it hung. He had got it only a little way up when his hand paused, and for a moment he stood as immovable as the foundation of the Island. His own white face smiled pitilessly back to him from the blue mysterious darkness.

The last time a face had looked out of that glass it was a face not wholly unlike his own. That young face would never look out of that glass again; never look upon him again. Never, never, never! His son was gone!

As slowly as he had raised the glass he let it fall back to its old position and glanced at the bed. With tender hands he took the haft of the clasp-knife, and having rubbed it softly on his sleeve, placed it under the

pillow, where the boy usually kept it at night; then, setting the chair against the head of the bed, he sat down, blew out the candle, and, with arms folded across his chest, sat by the vacant bed all the night.

CHAPTER XV.

RESTITUTION.

THE dawn of the next day broke broad and pure, and a silver radiance crept over the land. A rampart of leaden clouds stood upon the western horizon, but above spread the vast expanse of intense blue.

Opposite the Island, on the downs, lay a man. He had been there all night, with his face towards the Bishop's. When the sun lifted itself above the eastern verge of the downs he rose, stretched himself and looked sleepily around. Then he ran up and down, beating his arms on his chest to warm him-

self, for the air was chilly. After a while he sat down and watched the Island intently.

For an hour he did not move out of the attitude he had assumed. His legs were crossed, his hands on his knees, and his head and neck thrust forward.

It was now broad day. The birds were floating seaward through the gentle warmth of the dewy morning. Over the grey-blue sea hung a thin veil of vapour, and through this the fishing boats were stealing towards the shore.

Still the watcher never stirred. His dull eyes remained fixed, his clumsy form rigid, and his whole soul bent on the isolated column which had been the home of the Bishop in olden times.

The boats would not be in for an hour, and it would take half-an-hour to get the fish up to the village, and no fish could reach

Clonmore from Killard until three hours later. Yet the carrier was selling the fish in the market-place of Clonmore before that man altered his attitude. Then he got up, glanced uneasily at the fiery sun, wiped his forehead, and, taking a large stone, flung it with all his might. It rolled along the surface of the island and suddenly disappeared.

He waited, but nothing followed. He threw another, and another, with the same result. He appeared to grow desperate, looked at the sun once more, then in the direction of the village, and finally muttered:

"He said eleven, and it must be long after ten now, and 'twill take a good half-hour to get there."

The watcher stamped his feet and wrung his hands in despair.

Presently the head and bust of Lane rose into view.

The man on the mainland uttered a cry of joy and made rapid signs to the other.

In a listless, dull abstraction the deaf mute approached and stood on the brink confronting Tom. His eyes were vacant and bloodshot. His hair hung down in shaggy disorder about his white face. Over his bare chest his long tangled beard spread, matted and hard. He looked at the Fool, made a gesture of recognition; then he became immovable. His coat, waistcoat, and shirt were open; his shoulders drooped forward, his arms hung nervelessly by his side.

The Fool made a gesture to rouse the other's attention, but Lane did not acknowledge it.

Then Tom opened his waistcoat, held the left side in both hands, bent it backward and forward frequently, turned up the lower edge, examined the seam carefully, and finally pointed to Lane's waistcoat.

The other man followed the gestures of his friend with interest, beginning at attention, ending at fear. He rapidly subjected the left side of his own waistcoat to a similar course, and when he arrived at the seam, found it open. Thrusting his hand between the lining and the cloth, he held it there a moment. His face flushed, wild baleful light shone in his eyes, and, uttering a yell, he with one hand made a fierce questioning gesture to the Fool, while holding the other parallel to the ground at the height of his son's head. "Had his son the paper?"

"No. A low-sized man."

"Of Killard?"

"No; Clonmore, where they bought fish and sold hooks."

"How did the man get the paper?"

"Don't know."

"Son had stolen and given paper to low-sized man?"

"Don't know. But come ashore. Come ashore at once. Low-sized man would restore paper if he (Lane) came to Killard; not give up paper to any one else. Come! Sun gone past where man had marked sky for meeting."

Swiftly Lane drew up his rope bridge, and flung the loop over the iron-hook. In a minute he was in the net-work, and in less than two he stood panting beside the Fool. "Let us run," he signalled to his friend, and the two set off as quickly as they could go towards the village.

As he ran his thoughts were in a tumult of anger and dread. Now, had not the curse come? was it not operating already? His son, influenced by the malignant spirit inherent in him, had stolen the paper, the

one only paper connected with the secret. But how had he got it? He himself did not know how long it had been out of his possession. Had the boy, while he fondled him in his arms, abstracted it at the bidding of the evil resident in his ears? Would all be known when they arrived at Killard? What form was discovery to take, marauders or police? But however discovery came, in the centre would be the boy, his son, his only child!

The last thought drove him like a goad, and he dashed fiercely forward, leaving Tom far behind. He gained the village by himself, and waited angrily for his companion to come up.

"Was the boy with the man who had the paper?"

"No. At least, not last night."

In a few minutes the two men entered

Casey's shop. Tom led the way into the back room. Here they found Cahill and Mr. Heywood waiting for them.

"Which man had the paper?"

Tom pointed to Cahill.

For an instant the mute seemed about to spring on the young man; but by a powerful effort he restrained himself, and held out his hand, peremptorily demanding the draught.

Cahill shrank from him, saying at the same time to his companion, in a tone of mingled triumph and fear, "Now, Mr. Heywood! Now, keep your eye on this man! He's David Lane of the Bishop's."

Lane seemed as though another moment's delay would rouse him beyond his power of restraint.

"Watch him!" cried Cahill in great excitement, "but don't touch him. He's more dangerous than a wild beast."

"The paper! The paper! The paper!" demanded Lane furiously.

"You'd better give it to him without any delay," urged Tom, "or he'll be at your throat."

"Have you enough of him yet?" said Cahill to the philosopher.

"The time is certainly short, not above a minute, I should think. It might require more time to make a nice analysis; but for a general idea I have had sufficient opportunity." Mr. Heywood was perfectly unmoved.

Cahill threw the draught on the table, and drew back hastily.

With a loud discordant cry, Lane seized it and thrust it into the pocket of his unbuttoned coat.

Tom interpreted, "Where did you find it?"

"What's that to you?"

"If you do not tell where you got it, I'll break the table into staves, and kill you where you stand."

"Leave the place. There is a curse on you and your race, and no Christian man would tell you anything."

Tom signified the "curse" by pointing to Lane's ears. When the father saw this all anger against Cahill died out of him. His arms fell, his head drooped, and with a heavy tread and eyes bent vacantly on the ground, he strode slowly out of the room, followed by his only friend.

"The boy! The boy! The boy!" he thought. "Yes, he was cursed in the boy. Already here was proof. His child had taken the paper, and given it to a stranger from Clonmore. The curse was on him, and vengeance was at hand, with his only child at the core.

"But still there was nothing revealed. The draught was no good without the key, and the key had never left him. Never could, until he so willed it!

"Yet, might it not be that through those ears the child could have found out the key; might have found out the secret itself? Might there not be other faculties in other men enabling them to penetrate to everything he thought securely hidden? But if all had been discovered by the boy, why did this man seek him? Why did he return the paper; and without money, too? If he had asked gold for it, the gold would have been forthcoming. No, no, all was safe.

"Would the child by-and-by, when he grew to be a man, find out all. He, himself, had not found out all until he was older than the boy. What terrible, what hideous aspect would destruction assume?

He had got out of the village by that time, his faithful friend still following. Moved by the deep dejection visible in the mute, Tom approached him and touched him softly. The other turned swiftly round, caught the Fool by the shoulders, and shook him roughly. Surprise and grief filled the face of Tom, and he cried out, as he made signs of affectionate protest:—

"What are you doing, David Lane? Is that the way you treat your only friend in all this world?"

The expression of the dull face, and the gentle absence of resentment, struck the mute. He let go his hold, patted his friend softly on the cheek, thrust some money into Tom's pocket, and making a sign that he wished to be alone, turned and resumed his way towards his desolate home.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOHN LANE LEARNS TO SPEAK.

THE morning following his expulsion John Lane awoke before anyone in the house was stirring. A bed had been arranged for him in the second sleeping room. In the other slept the fisherman's wife, and in a small hooded cot their little daughter Mary. Martin was out with the boats. The boy looked around in great surprise. No alteration had taken place during the night. The furniture of the room had not been disturbed. He arose and went to the window. The houses of the village spread beneath

him, and already people were abroad. How was all this? No new island; no new room!

He put on his clothes dreamily. When he had finished dressing he tried all his pockets. The clasp-knife was still missing. How was all this? His old notion of what would happen had halted. Things seemed to be as they had been when he went to sleep.

This was discouraging, sickening. Oh! when would the change come? When should all be as it had been; all that had been, forgotten? He had no memory of arriving at the Island, but he remembered coming here. Was he never to forget? Was he ever to live here? Hateful thought! Was he to remain in that room always? He saw a door, but he durst not open it. He feared too much to know further. Perhaps

if he remained quiet he should fall asleep again, and in that sleep the old order might be restored.

He crept back to bed, covered his head with the clothes, and lay still.

In time Mrs. Martin was stirring. She had to meet her husband on the beach. When she was ready to go, she cast a tender look at the little cot where her child was sleeping, left the bedroom door an inch ajar and went out, after glancing with great dissatisfaction at the door of the room occupied by the boy. Her dislike to him had increased rather than diminished. Except at night, the outer door of the house always remained on the latch.

The breakfast things lay ready on the square table of plain deal. Over the turf burning on the hearth in the huge chimney-place hung a metal kettle, and upon a rush

mat in front of the fire slept a large, round-headed, thick-limbed yellow cat.

The shutting of the outer door roused the cat. He got up, shook himself, blinked aimlessly around, shook himself again, and then submitted the whole room to a critical examination. Apparently the examination afforded him little satisfaction, for once again shaking himself and sneezing in protest, he looked long and carefully at the door of the room from which Mrs. Martin had issued. Once more stretching himself, he proceeded, with the elaborate caution of a conspirator who doubted the strength of his plot, to approach the slightly open door. As soon as he reached it all faith in his plot seemed to desert him. He abandoned his tactics of secrecy, uttered a low, soft cry, and pushing the door in with his nose, entered the room where little Mary was

sleeping. Here he assumed a bold and resolute attitude, as though he set fate at defiance, and purring, jumped on the cot and boldly thrust his face against the face of the sleeping child.

With a cry the child awoke, and discovering her favourite playfellow, whose rough salute she sleepily resented, called out in a sweet, fresh voice, full of gentle expostulation, "There, Jos! Go away, Jos! I don't want you, Jos!" pushing the cat from her all the time with both her rosy hands.

But Jos had too great a dislike to solitude to be defeated. He slipped through the young soft hands, and once more thrust his cold nose and hairy whiskers against her delicate blooming face.

With a loud, long laugh, that sounded like a cascade of water falling through silver wires, the little girl sprang up into a sitting

posture, throwing back with one hand her rich auburn hair from her white forehead and throat, and with the other hand soothing the purring intruder.

"Go away, sir. Go away now, sir, and I'll get up and nurse you at the fire, if you're good."

She had sprung out of bed and danced to the door, and stood holding it open for Jos.

With the dignity of triumph in his gait and with erect tail, the cat stalked slowly from the room and took up his old position on the mat. He had unshaken faith in his plans now. He knew by experience that in a few minutes that door would re-open and his little mistress come forth and take him to her lap, and, perhaps, give him some milk. If the truth must be told, his manifestation of doubts and fears were a mere device to deceive spectators, of which there

were none, if tables and chairs and stools be not looked upon as such. Who can tell what they seemed to Jos's green eyes? In many of this cat's ways there was a dark and tortuous subtlety which would have led a thoughtful observer to doubt him, particularly as he was still quite young.

To show his complete reliance on his scheme he sat with his back to the door, and proceeded to make a somewhat elaborate toilet on his face, keeping his eyes as carefully shut as a child who has had bitter experience of soap. To any one knowing the present position of affairs, and seeing him that morning, it would have been plain he paid unnecessary attention to his ears, evidently with the design of keeping himself as much as possible in ignorance of what might occur in his rear. And yet,

notwithstanding all this duplicity, the cat was sound at the core.

The door opened at length, and Mary stepped into the bright sunlit room. She wore a light blue frock, white stockings, and black boots. Her little plump arms were bare from the elbows, and her frock did not close at the neck, but was open from the shoulders upward. The arrangement of her hair showed the hand of an amateur. In front there was an attempt at order, but behind it hung in a loose, wilful tangle of radiant chestnut over her white neck.

A slight shudder passed through the cat as he heard the door open and the patter of the small feet; otherwise he gave no sign, but went on washing his face.

"You're a bad, nasty Jos to wake me; and I won't have it, sir." The voice made very

pleasant music in the silence of that bright room.

Jos's ears seemed to give him more trouble than ever this morning.

"Do you hear me, sir?" with a stamp of the tiny foot.

Jos switched his tail once hastily, as if angry thoughts were arising in his mind respecting the difficulty experienced with his ears to-day.

"And I won't give you any milk this morning."

Jos stopped, opened his eyes, looked sharply into the fire as though it were a glass, and he felt anxious to see what progress he was making. Then, as if he had detected some defect, he shut up his eyes quickly, and resumed his work more energetically than ever.

Drawing a stool to the hearth, his little

mistress sat down, and regarded the criminal severely.

All at once Jos stopped and looked up. There was in his glance and manner an aspect of memory dimly illumined. It seemed as though he could get no further than a vague idea he had met her somewhere before. He assumed an air of candid enquiry and examined her minutely, whisked his tail once in token that he gave it up, and began slowly and solemnly to raise his paw as if to finish his washing.

The cold-blooded duplicity of the beast smote the heart of the little maiden keenly. She could bear to be awakened by a tyrant cat, but she could not endure to be forgotten. The girl is mother to the woman, as the boy is father to the man; and, as there is scarcely anything a woman cannot forgive in those she loves, except indifference, Mary could

no longer allow the cold feeling of this cat's forgetfulness or carelessness to dwell in her warm little bosom.

"Jos," she cried affectionately, pleadingly, "my own dear Jos, I was only joking. Come!"

With a sound, half purr, half mew, the great yellow cat sprang into her open arms, and nestled and rubbed himself against her with every show of love. She bent over him and kissed him and stroked him, murmuring all the pretty things she could think of, and as she did so the outer door opened, and Father Murtagh entered.

The child rose, placed the cat on the floor, and stood calmly regarding the priest.

"Good morning, Mary. You are up very early, my child. I see you are at your old work of nursing poor Jos. Where is your mother?"

"Gone to meet father, sir."

Years had dealt severely with Father Murtagh. There were streaks of silver in his hair. The furrows in his cheek had deepened into sharpness. His shoulders were rounded and drooped permanently, and his hollow temples showed a network of creases and dull blue veins.

No time of all the year soothed the wearing troubles of his mind so much as those calm, clear summer mornings, and he was always abroad at such times before the people of the village were awake. The even sunlight, the sweet moist air, the expanse of tranquil sea beguiled his soul of much of its pain. They seemed to re-impose on earth primeval purity and beauty. It was for a while possible to forget that sin had ever darkened earth and clouded heaven. The mellow healthfulness of morning ap-

peared inconsistent with the need for that great Sacrifice. Man could not have broken the covenant and be permitted to dwell in such holiness of peace in nature. The favour of the elements read like a promise of divine mercy reaching backward and forward, throughout all time. And although often afterwards this man questioned his right to draw consolation from mere material manifestations, he could not resist the temptation to go forth and taste a brief respite.

"Will your father and mother be back soon, Mary?" he asked tenderly. How his heart yearned over children! They were the most perfect things left us out of the ruin of God's great plan.

"Oh, yes, sir; she'll be back soon, for the kettle is boiling."

"And is that your clock, little Mary?" he said with a faint smile.

"Yes, sir; she and father always come soon after the kettle begins to boil. Don't they, Jos?"

Jos, sitting sullenly on the mat, when he heard himself appealed to, winked both his eyes as though in satisfaction for his deposition from his mistress's lap he had sworn an oath of Carthusian silence, no matter how much he might know.

"Very well, Mary. I'll take a chair and wait."

She felt bound to display hospitality after the manner of her mother, and made a meritorious but futile effort to dust the chair with her frock in lieu of apron; but by no means at her disposal could she succeed in getting at more than an inch of the seat of the chair.

"I'm not big enough, sir," she said ruefully. "But some other morning, when I'm big, you'll come; won't you, sir?"

"Perhaps, my dear child. Perhaps." He patted her disordered hair and sat down.

"But, indeed, when I'm big, I'll do it like mother. I know how. *Won't* you come?"

"If I can, my child. If I can you may be sure I will." He had not been thinking of her willingness to do him the service; but he had been wondering where he should be when she was "big." "How beautiful," he thought while the child had been speaking, "are some of the qualities of our fallen nature. Here is the spirit of charity in this little child. When she is grown up how will it be with her? Will she be like her mother, as good and full of faith as we can expect to find here below; or will she be froward, and raise her eyes carelessly to Heaven?"

"Father often sits like that," broke in

the little maid quite freely. She had no awe of him.

"Like what?" he asked with a start.

"Asleep with his eyes open."

"I wasn't asleep, my dear. I was only thinking."

"Then I wish father wouldn't think. It frightens me."

"And it frightens me, too," thought the priest with a shudder.

After some time he said, "But, Mary, you are not all alone in the house? Isn't someone staying here?"

"Oh, yes, sir; John Lane. Father brought him here yesterday, and mother put him to sleep in the other room, and he can't speak, but can whistle like birds and make noises like the wind."

The tiny speaker seemed much impressed with the wonderfulness of all this, and, as

she spoke, stared with her round blue eyes at the clergyman.

His mind wandered from her "Oh, yes," to the end of her hurried speech, and again he fell into a reverie. "A noble man this Edward Martin! A noble Christian man! He seems to have wandered out of the Old Testament into our days. A man far above his position; yea, and his times. A man of inexhaustible magnanimity, gentle to all around him, stern to himself. No other man in the village would take that child, that forlorn outcast, across his threshold. Alas! what must man have been in his perfect state, if such virtue survives? Not another man in all Killard would take that boy, even for my asking; but this brave man volunteers. Volunteers in such a cause on earth must surely be high among the chosen bands hereafter. He is far more fit

to bear my responsibilities than I am. He sees with an unerring eye and acts with an unerring hand, when I, with all my training in thought and discipline of spirit, hesitate and falter. I do not murmur at the weight of the burden for my own sake, but for others. Oh! if it should be that others through my unworthy lassitude or feebleness of purpose suffer, how terrible! That will be my never-ending torture to see them; my eternal agony to know that they are banished for ever because I did not make them loyal subjects of the Lord!"

The cold sweat gathered on his dull grey forehead, and rolled down his cheeks. His mouth was partly open, his eyes fixed and scared, as though he were already gazing on the terrible picture he had conjured up; his emaciated, nervous hands clutched and crushed one another convulsively.

At last the child screamed and ran away to her room. He looked up, shook himself, and with his hand brushed away the drops hanging from his eyebrows, and uttered a long low sigh, half wail. Then recollecting where he sat, he called to her in a soft sad voice:—

"Mary! Come to me, my dear. Don't be afraid of me. I was only thinking, that was all. I will do you no harm, and I am not unwell."

She did not approach, but stood holding the door and staring with round frightened eyes. "What made you cry?"

"Did I cry, my child? I did not know it."

"Look! the tears are on your cheek still; wipe them away, you frighten me. There is another tear on your other cheek."

"Tears," he thought. "No tears. We may weep our little griefs away, but our

woes must come through the pores. I have scared the little one." Then aloud, "Come to me. Come to me; I'll not weep again. Come, little Mary; I'll tell you what brought me here. I want to see the little boy."

"He's a big boy," interrupted Mary indignantly, as if the family credit had been assailed.

"Well; the big boy. I'll go call him. If it's time for little girls I am sure it's time for *big* boys to be up." He laid a playful emphasis on the adjective, and went towards the closed door; opened it, and entered.

The boy had not stirred. Gently drawing down the clothes, Father Murtagh found him lying on his face fully dressed.

With a tender touch he raised young Lane, and led him into the outer room, and set

him down on one of the chests in the chimney-place and stood over him.

The wondering eyes of the boy explored the new strange figure in hope of finding some likeness to what he wished for. Then sighing he dropped his glance, and gazed into the smouldering fire. He had no fear of strangers. He had known no feeling of fear in all his life, until the manner of his father grew unfamiliar and suspicious. His father's treatment had shocked and terrified him, but even now, in the absence of absolute gestures of repulsion, he would have run to his father and clung to him.

Those new beings seemed to have no relevance to him or his case. They were only the necessary intermediate phantoms between him and his new home. By-and-by they would fade away, and be no more remembered by him than what had occurred before his first coming to the Island.

The only one who roused a trace of curiosity was little Mary. He had now and again seen full-grown men and women pass by the Island, never any one like her. She was smaller than he, and had bright warm hair like sandstone wet with sea-water in the sun. His memory of his mother was so dim and misty, that for aught he could imagine or remember, Mrs. Martin might be she. But this lesser mother, this being smaller than himself, with such different hair and eyes, what was she? His own hair came no further than his neck, but hers hung down her back like sea-weed in the washing of the tide. He had a strong dislike to touching those new beings. There seemed in doing so a certain disloyalty to his father. He took no further notice of the priest or the little girl, but sat sadly by the fire awaiting the transformation scene of his destiny.

The priest had carefully observed young Lane, and as he stood over the bent figure, and little Mary took up Jos and sat in silence, he thought:—

"So far he is rescued from the evil influence of his unchristian father. So far we are approaching good. He has already, I thank God devoutly, been marked as one of the followers. Pledges have been made for his adopting the track. Now arises the duty of seeing that he treads the way. He appears gentle and docile. I pray he may prove ductile. I pray with all my soul, with all the entreaty of humble worship, that the evil of his race may cease here, and the new man be at hand. He can hear.

"The infliction under which his father labours does not descend upon him. Heaven grant this prove a sign that the greater infliction of want of faith may not descend

upon him. By-and-by he will learn to speak. He shall be taught the Great Name. He shall be instructed in the way of communicating with the Most High, and he shall be made to plead day and night that his unhappy father may be drawn out of his darkness into the light of faith. O God! grant that the prayers of the child may avail for the father. Amen."

"Here they are, sir!" cried Mary, starting up and running off to the door.

In a few seconds Edward Martin and his wife were bowing to Father Murtagh. The woman raised the daughter for her father's kiss. He then went over, and putting one hand on the outcast's shoulder, stroked the boy's dark hair with the other. The woman gathered her own child closely to her breast, regarded her husband's action with disquieted eyes, and thought:—

"A boy! a boy! Oh, if it had only pleased Heaven to send me a boy, too! Men may love their girls, but they are proud of their boys. Oh, what would I not give that such a one were mine! Is this boy to be for ever in the house? Am I always to be thinking 'I have no boy?'"

"Edward Martin," said the priest solemnly, "you have done well to take this child, and as you answer for his worldly necessities, I will look to his spiritual requirements, as far as it is given me to do; and moreover, should he prove capable of taking in worldly knowledge, I shall see to him; for it is but fit he who by infinite mercy has been delivered out of bondage and placed in our hands should have the best that we can give, not so much out of regard to him, as in gratitude to God, who has been

pleased to favour us with such a charge. This is what I have come to say."

He held out his hand as he spoke. Martin took it cordially, without any show of modesty or embarrassment. He stood in fear of no man, but he respected all. He considered every man as a complete and independent being responsible to himself for all he did, and unjustified in seeking excuse for lapses in duty at the charge of others. He looked on conscience as the tribunal for all acts; and mere worldly honours or distinctions seemed to him no more than sky or sea, things wherein he had no interference, and which were for the uses of those who enjoyed them, lending neither importance nor majesty. There was no one in the parish showed less exceptional respect to Father Murtagh; but then no one showed so much respect to each one of his neighbours without distinction.

"We're all the same," he would say. "Where is the difference between us? I don't know but the man who seems worst, may be better than the man who seems best; such matters, when they don't affect me, are no part of my business, but each man's own."

On the evening of that day Edward Martin went to sea as usual; his wife had to go down to the village, and the two children were left awhile together. When she returned she found John Lane sitting on a chair at the open door, and little Mary on a stool at his feet. A cloud passed over the face of the mother. The intruder had dissipated the likeness of home, and was a cold and forbidding impertinence. Her daughter ran eagerly towards her, and catching her by the skirt, cried in loud, happy, cheerful voice :—

"Oh, mother; come, come!" dragging her in the direction of the boy.

For a moment the little maiden looked out of her bright, joyous blue eyes at his sombre face, and then pointing to herself, said, "Who's this?"

"Mayee."

The mother started back and gazed in terror awhile at him, then catching her own child in her arms she shook her, and pressed her almost savagely in her arms, to the astonishment of the girl, who began to whimper at the rough treatment and ungentle looks.

"Who taught him that? What villain taught this child of darkness my child's name for a first word? Who? tell me!"

"I," murmured Mary, between sobs.

"You! you! you!" The woman seemed half frantic with superstitious terrors.

"How dare you, miss! How dare you, you bad child! Oh! misfortune on the day that brought him to my house, to be under the same roof with my child. Edward Martin, if evil comes of this, how will you answer me?"

"Mayee," repeated the boy, looking up with some slight awakening of interest. These people were becoming less shadowy to him by this time.

At the repetition of the strange, thin, unfamiliar sound mocking her child's name, the woman sprang back and glared at him in an affrighted agony. The little girl now cried out, and sobbed and wailed.

The crying of the little girl struck a chord in the boy's slumbering mind. It seemed somewhat analogous to his own case; the big woman was making the little woman cry; his big father had made him cry. He

stretched out his hands as though he would take the child.

With a shriek Mrs. Martin sprang past him, and rushing into the house put her weeping daughter into the sleeping-room, fastened the door, and stood sentinel on the outside, gasping,

"Take my own child out of my own arms! He must go to-morrow; he or I."

END OF VOL. I. AND OF PART I.

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